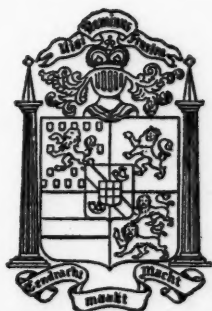


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# *The* REFORMED REVIEW



The Reformed Church in America

*A Quarterly Journal of the*  
**WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
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# The Reformed Review

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## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

G. ERNEST WRIGHT

### I. IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD TO BE LEARNED FROM

#### "OUR PRETTIFIED PROPHETS"?

Last spring Professor Romig called my attention to an article by a layman, Albert N. Williams, in the *Saturday Review* (April 10, 1954, pp. 26-28). The article was entitled "Our Prettified Prophets." Mr. Williams calls attention to the fact that in 1953 five of the six best sellers in the non-fiction field had something to do with religion. Along with the Revised Standard Version there was, of course, the ubiquitous Mr. Kinsey whose cultural interest is confined to our sex life. But next came Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Bishop Sheen's *Life Is Worth Living*, and Mrs. Marshall's *A Man Called Peter*. The sixth, *Angel Unaware*, was at least on the outskirts of spiritual conviction. The author thinks it rather significant that people in our time should "want bread for the soul far more than they do a prod in the plexus or a lift to the libido. . . . The human triangle no longer serves as the granite keystone in plot architecture. . . . James Jones comes and goes; Lloyd Douglas goes on forever."

Yet, the author feels, there is something wrong with these religious giant-sellers and with 99 out of 100 non-fiction books sold under the banner of "religion." They seem to "address themselves only to the spiritual comforts available to a Christian of sure faith, and not at all with the religious foundations of that faith . . . . Faith today has a thousand voices; religion flowers in silence . . . . Faith, so strong and so bold in the novels and histories that deal with it, is looked upon as a knowledge that can float through man's consciousness without any reason for being. . . . It has been torn away from the stream of history that brought it into being, and it is now established as a static and extra-human force . . . . It is the proud but faceless personification of the tragedy of our time—the pathetic illiteracy that seeks to erect a tower of faith on the quicksands of ignorance of the historical events which first nourished the seeds of that faith . . . . The powder of prettiness and pettiness that has sifted down upon the shoulders of our Old Testament prophets and New Testament fathers has served altogether to smother them as human beings, and to take them, heels dragging in their own greatness, out of the arena of history."

Here is a layman who knows something about the Christian faith and who instinctively feels that there's something wrong with our prettiness

and pettiness. These altogether lovely books, he feels, do not, somehow, communicate a knowledge of God to the reader. Why? I do not feel that he is very articulate theologically in his answers, but he is certainly "feeling" toward them. He knows that the Bible is a history book concerned with the struggle for the knowledge of God in the midst of the frustration, boredom and blood of the world. Christianity is a historical religion, which means to him that it is not simply an idea or a devotional exercise, like Buddhism, that it cannot speak about or nourish faith apart from its historical rootage. I would go on to say that the reason for this is obvious. Biblical man and we who follow him confess our faith by telling the story of what once happened, because that story is the key, the clue to what has happened since. This story provides, to use a figure of Calvin, the spectacles which enable us to see clearly, to interpret, to evaluate, to participate in a vocation. And this combination of new sight and participation, and only this, furnishes the soil in which faith and the knowledge of God grow.

By contrast, Mr. Williams says, "our prettified prophets" present a kind of knowledge called faith that can float through man's consciousness without any reason for being. Torn away from its history, it is a static, extra-human force, having to do only with God, and not with the historical record of the quickening relation between God and man. Faith we are told is power. Get it; then see your difficulties vanish! Faith is here coupled with the classic theme of American comedy: the poor weakling who is chinning the curbstone because of a bad boss, a bad mother-in-law, a bad something. Then at the proper moment he exerts himself; he gets power; he rises from the curbstone. He puts the bad people in their place; he becomes a great success. Faith, when coupled with that comedy theme and existing apart from the righteousness of God, is a luxury of the prosperous in this country. Here are the "broken cisterns that can hold no water," the "smooth things," the "illusions," of which the prophets spoke. And surely the word of Jeremiah applies to us as it did to the people of his day:

An appalling and horrible thing  
has occurred in the land:

The prophets prophesy falsely,  
and the priests rule by their direction;

And my people love to have it so,  
but what will you do in the end thereof? (5:30-31)

How *do* we know God? This question was asked in a recent sermon in Chicago; and I think the answer given on that occasion is far too typical of our day. It was: "We know God, first from nature and, secondly, from within, from the heart." Now there is nothing new about this answer,



nor is it especially Christian. The God of nature and the God within—these are the age-old gods of the natural man.

The devotional leader of a vesper or sunrise service in a summer conference on the edge of a lake is inclined to say: "God is the beauty of nature or the glory of the sun." But what kind of a God is this? An aesthetic feeling? The ancient polytheists saw more clearly into nature's true being. Mother Nature does not speak with one voice, but with many voices. The Mother-Goddess and the God of Healing depict one side of nature (even as does the Virgin Mary in Catholicism). But the other side is more somber and awful, even while glorious. Baal or Enlil, the gods of the Storm, were kings, the personification of nature's force, with hidden, uncontrollable, amoral (if not immoral) depths to their nature. Then there were Ishtar, Anat and Ashtoreth, the goddesses who depicted all the beauty and loveliness of love. These were also goddesses of war, because uncontrolled love for its own sake is closely allied in nature with blood and battle. And then there are the gods of death, pestilence and disease. These are in nature too. Indeed, Darwin's survival of the fittest may portray more nearly the observable heart of nature than beauty, health and motherhood. Can one therefore say that the primary knowledge of God is to be found in nature? Can nature be unified into a God? If one says that the argument from nature is simply to prove that God exists, that there is a first cause, then I submit that the arguments of Professor Tillich must be considered when he says that to try and prove that God exists in this way is to deny him. Existence and causation are elements of creation. Certainly God is no cause like other causes, nor does he "exist" as a thing exists. He is above and beyond all such categories of the human mind.

Well, then, what about the God within? If you asked a good Hindu, would he not point within himself when asked where God is and how he knows him? "God? He is in here; this is where I know him"! The categories of mysticism, spiritual experience and even prayer as the ways of *experiencing* God—when these are developed in and for themselves alone, are they not types of self-fulfillment, and therefore self-centered? Even to possess some ONE great experience and to interpret that as the time when I was saved—is not this a self-centered, egocentric, perversion of Biblical faith?

One of the big problems throughout my life has been the problem of piety. How is God real to me? From the Protestantism of my youth, I came to believe that the chief thing was to have some sort of spiritual, meaning emotional and aesthetic, experience. The picture of the truly pious man in my mind was the picture of the man on his knees, struggling to become aware of, to have experience of God. Yet I have always been something of an activist. I must be up and doing. Asceticism, knees on hard floors—that I decided was not for me. Hence I early came to the

conclusion that I would never be a truly religious and pious man. So I went for scholarship, the social gospel, psychiatry and archaeology. But then came the discovery of the Bible and the answer to my dilemma as far as piety and the knowledge of God are concerned.

## II. THE BIBLE: THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS COMMUNICATED THROUGH A FORM OR STRUCTURE OF FAITH. THE BIBLICAL FORM IS THE COVENANT OF FAITH.

As we turn to the Bible, it is quite clear that nature there does reveal the glory of God and the heavens show forth his handiwork, but only because he has first been known as the Redeemer in history, in the actual events of human life. Since the Redeemer has shown to the undeserving his remarkable love and grace, then and only then is it known that both the creator and the creation are good.

Furthermore, the private human soul is not the only arena of God. It was God's way of shaking a person loose from his former moorings and facing him directly with his task and vocation. Of course we do not want things that way. We are interested in God only as a final source of power which we can use as WE want. So we are inclined to "turn the heat on" God, to say: "Now God, it is 11 o'clock. It is time for a devotional. We want to have an experience of You because we are tired." We want a private cocktail party to get a little stimulant. Yet when we don't seem to get that stimulant by such methodology, we decide that there is something wrong with our forms of worship, though our people have long since concluded that nothing is supposed to happen.

In the Bible what is the central thing about the great experience of Moses? The burning bush to attract attention? Is it the words: "Put off your shoes . . ." ? Nay, rather it is, "Moses, come now, I SEND you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people . . . out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10). Or what of the great experience of Isaiah? Was it solely the prophet's FEELING OF God's holiness and his own sin? Are those scholars correct who try to derive Isaiah's theology, his whole knowledge of God, from this one great experience? I say, rather, that the central and climactic verse of that sixth Chapter of Isaiah is the eighth: "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying: 'Whom shall I *send*, and who will *go* for us?' Then I said: 'Here am I! Send me!' And he said: "Go . . ." Similarly in the call of Jeremiah, the central words are: "I appointed you a prophet to the nations . . . to all to whom I SEND you, you shall GO" (Jer. 1:5 and 7). And finally in the conversion experience of Paul on the Damascus Road. The Lord's words were: "Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to DO." And to Ananias the Lord said: "Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name

before the gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel . . ." (Acts 9:6, 15).

Note the frequent occurrence in these widely separated passages of the words "send," "go," "do." The experience of God conveyed no complete theology, no statement of abstract doctrines, no precious feelings that were cherished for years hence. The experience was too awful to be sentimentalized, to be made either pretty or petty. It was rather God's way of turning a man around in his tracks and CONFRONTING him with his job. "Here is the way! Walk in it!" "Here is your WORK. GO, DO IT!"

It is thus clear that the knowledge of God gained through these experiences was not a static faith floating through a man's consciousness; it was something to be done. Knowledge and truth in the Bible involve things to do, not simply a belief in a God of nature nor an experience of the God within. God is too busy, too active, too dynamic to wait for us to experience him in the acts of worship we devise on our own time. He is to be known by what he had done and said, by what he is now doing and saying; and also he is known when we DO what he commands us to do.

Yet the awareness of a calling, of being sent to do something, comes in and through a community of life. The knowledge of the Biblical God is not formed in us in our solitariness. It is not a private or mysterious something which one treasures within. Knowledge is not conveyed or communicated apart from a social form or structure of thought and experience. In the Bible that form is the COVENANT SOCIETY, and the knowledge of God is communicated in and through that form.

Every religion, I believe, has such a form through which knowledge is communicated. In Hinduism, for example, Professor Romig tells me that the central structure is the wheel of Karma. Together with it is the law of Dharma which is the law of the society or caste in which one is placed. To keep this law is self-fulfillment, for knowledge *is* self-fulfillment, and by this knowledge one hopes to get off the wheel of Karma in future existence. In Mesopotamian polytheism with its focus of attention on the integration of society with nature, the universe was conceived as a cosmic state ruled by the adjustment of many divine wills one to another. Man was the slave of this state, and the knowledge of the divine world was communicated to him as to a slave through a variety of rites and through the struggle for existence in nature.

In Israel, too, the universe was conceived as a cosmic state, ruled, however, by one DIVINE WILL. The world is in rebellion against this great Lord and he is in the midst of the struggle to make it his faithful kingdom. Meanwhile he has formed a new society in this earth as a foretaste of the goal.

In other words, God is presented to us primarily in the form of a Ruler who is doing definite things. He is a KING IN WARFARE to make the

world HIS Kingdom. He is the KING AS JUDGE, trying people and nations for their rebellions against his rule. He is the *King as Lord, Shepherd and Father* of his new community which he has formed and with which he struggles to the end that it become his faithful steward or agent.

The pattern of the new society also had a definite picture behind it which gave a structure of meaning to human existence. That picture was derived from the conception of covenant, a term borrowed from law. Covenant was then and still is a treaty between two legal communities sealed by an oath or vow. The particular type of covenant that originally lay behind the biblical doctrine of society has only recently been discovered by Professor George E. Mendenhall of the University of Michigan.<sup>1</sup> It is to be found in the suzerainty treaties of the second millennium B.C. This is a treaty between a great king and his vassal. A suzerain is not a king among other kings. He is a king of kings and lord of lords who grants his covenant to his vassal. In the treaty he speaks to his vassal in the first person and describes his benevolent acts. The vassal is thus to obey him, not because he has to, but because the great king has been so good to him. And the first requirement of the vassal is to serve the great king and him alone; a vassal state then, as now, is prohibited from having foreign relations with other powers.

This type of covenant originally provided the picture, the form or structure, through which the knowledge of God was communicated in the Bible. God was there known as the great Suzerain whose benevolent acts toward his newly created community were to lead this people to serve him through love. No other divine powers could be honored for these would weaken the central commitment. And the service was one of freedom. The general obligations were cast in absolute form; within the framework they provided the vassal was free to order his own life. The Ten Commandments have sometimes been objected to because they are negative, "Thou shalt not." Yet, as Professor Mendenhall has pointed out, the negative is the only truly universal form of law. A prohibition forbids action in one area, while leaving all other areas free. A positive law limits all action to the one area prescribed, thus preventing freedom of decision, unless the law is so general that it provides nothing more than a frame of reference. One of the great struggles in both the Old and New Testaments was against the attempt to interpret the detailed positive law of the legal community as the constitutional law of the divine Suzerain—something which happened in Judaism.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (Sept. 1954).

These remarks, I realize, are to some extent cryptic. Yet the main point I am here making is that the knowledge of God in the Bible was communicated through a definite social form with its own particular language to describe the nature of God and the meaning of our human lives. In this structure of thinking the emphasis is not on some pious, private or esoteric experience of the Great King. One does not do that sort of thing with a king. Instead, our focus of attention is upon a knowledge of the Lord's Will, on our attachment to him for what he has done, and on our loyalty to him in all that we do. The Lord has a vocation before his society and each member hears God's command addressed to him personally.

My description here has been drawn from the Old Testament, because it provides the key to the New. The essentials of this conception of the meaning of our lives under God have actually been fulfilled and realized in Christ. God has made Christ the Head, the King, of this community, and to live in it is to live "in Christ," to love him and serve him loyally.

### III. THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF "KNOWLEDGE," AS ILLUSTRATED ESPECIALLY BY THE PROPHETS.

In this setting we now can understand the peculiarly Biblical conception of "knowledge" as related to God.

One sentence that occurs again and again in the Old Testament, and one that is picked up and used especially in Ezekiel, is to the effect that such-and-such happened that "ye may KNOW that I am the Lord." Conversely, sinners and idolaters are the way they are precisely because they do not KNOW the Lord (Ps. 14:4; 53:4; Isa. 45:20). What is involved in this frequent use of the verb "know"? To know or not to know the Lord certainly does not have in emphasis belief in a set or prescribed creed or series of propositions, important though they may be as a guide to knowledge. Rather "to know the Lord" is to acknowledge that he is the Sovereign, that he is the Ruler who claims, and has a right to claim, our obedience because of all that he is and has done. When Isa. 11:9 says that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," he is speaking of the day when God's kingdom will have come, when his rule will be acknowledged and obeyed. When the same prophet says: "The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib, but Israel does not know. . . ." (1:3); or when Hosea says: "There is no faithfulness nor loyalty and no KNOWLEDGE OF GOD in the land; there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery" (4:1-2),—they are speaking about a special kind of knowledge. It is not simply a set of facts, truths, good ideas, or private experiences. It is rather a revealed knowledge of God's Lordship which has established a personal relationship to him, and which requires obedience. Hence those who know God will create and sustain community; those who do not know him will destroy community.

If I may paraphrase Rudolph Bultmann (*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, I, pp. 697-8), the conception of knowledge is conditioned by the importance and the claim of the known. Reality is not conceived as eternal being or the timeless forms and form-giving principles which always are and ever will be. Reality is what happens in time. And this is not a series of processes related simply by cause and effect. What happens in time are the acts of God or of man under God and in response to him. God is not thought of as a being who always is and whose existence is to be argued about one way or another; he is known as THE WILL who has a determined aim, who judges, is gracious, who requires. Knowledge, then, is not of God's eternal being but of his claim upon us. It is thus the reverent and obeyed acknowledgement of God's power, of his grace and requirement. So knowledge is not a private, inner possession of the knower. The theoretical life of the philosopher or theologian and the mystical experiences of those seeking religious experience are far removed from this conception. Knowledge involves the movement of the WILL, so that not to know is not an error to be corrected by more good ideas; it is a GUILT, a rebellion. The knowledge of God in the prophets is thus closely akin to the fear of God (cf. Isa. 11:2): reverent acknowledgement of God's power, of God's claim, which leads one to practice brotherly love, justice and righteousness.

#### IV. CONCLUSION: HOW DO WE KNOW GOD?

How, then, are we to know God? Is it, after all, possible for me, the activist, to be a pious man? Let us leave to one side the question of whether I am or not, and say immediately that it is certainly POSSIBLE. For piety is nothing other than that love for God which leads me to serve him, happily, loyally, gratefully in the knowledge of all he has done for me. It is to acknowledge the work of God in this world, the new community which he has established in Jesus Christ and through which my calling is meditated; and IT IS TO BE PASSIONATELY CONCERNED WITH THOSE THINGS GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT. I cannot know God unless I work for him with my whole heart and soul and strength. But it is for him we work, and not for ourselves. The most subtle danger which always confronts us is to identify our will with God's will. Since what we want is right, then we say that all we need to do is to worship. Since we are the good people in every community, all we need is a FEELING OF PIETY. But we cannot serve God and Mammon. The aim of all God's work is community, which is the reconciliation of our wills to God's will and to the persons of our fellows. God's peace in the covenant society is his requirement of us. And that peace involves love and justice and the willingness to be hurt as Christ was hurt for God's sake. We can become great ecclesiastics, build bigger and better churches, greater budgets and worship services, but still the prophetic word is inescapable!

"I hate, I despise your feasts . . . but let justice roll down as waters. . . ." How "shall I come before the Lord . . . ?" Will the Lord be pleased with our elaborate ecclesiasticism and with all our substitutes for true knowledge? "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love covenant loyalty, and to walk humbly in obedient and grateful service with your God."

The typical theological student is often troubled by his lack of a warm knowledge of God. He is inclined to think that what the seminary may need is improved worship services, more communion services and more prayer meetings. He also is inclined to think that all this book work, these lectures, papers and examinations have nothing to do with his knowledge of God, and he longs to get it over with and away from it all, and especially from all his personal problems in seminary life. It is a characteristic of us that we blame our surroundings for our inner, personal frustrations, and we always imagine that the pastures are greener elsewhere. So our student believes that as soon as he gets married, has a job, a comfortable home, several children, a new car, and a cat or dog—then and then only will he begin to learn about God. Yet that is all an escape, a running away. We spend our lives doing just that. Our whole activity is so often a form of escape, and when we run away from the present, how can we know God? To know God is to accept all that he has done, to give myself wholly to his service and to do faithfully and patiently the work now before me. That means the present studies, and it also means the active working with the other sinners around me. Knowledge and action are one with one another. Can it be said of me that wherever I am, there is an active Power, working in and through me to create community?

In nearly all seminaries of our country today we have a series of unsolved problems which make the achievement of Christian community difficult, if not impossible. With a large proportion of the students married and geographically scattered, there is no longer a unified center of attention and activity. The faculty do not provide it because they are many "gods," not one. Students soon come to the opinion that something is wrong, and are inclined to blame the faculty. And we of the administrative and teaching staff are certainly no paragons of wisdom and virtue. We are simply human beings struggling with the problems of our existence, and rushed to death in the solving of them, even as are you, the students. Yet I for one believe that it is time for a few frank words to be said on the other side.

The average student of our time is a peculiar type of parasite. His paramount interest is a job and security. To that end he goes to school. He takes all that is given him, by administrations, teachers, endowments, parents and the churches. But what does he give in return? Nothing, except the necessary dollars and the required class work to get him through. He



will rarely give himself. He comes to this seminary with high ideals, to be sure, but he wants to be prepared for a church profession. To be good in that profession means that he must have something more than passing marks and credits. He knows that a warm and strong knowledge of God must be formed in him. So he waits for it to come. Someone is supposed to give it to him. He has been receiving all his life, so now too he expects to receive faith as he receives credits. In his Junior year he for a time is all attention. He faithfully attends everything, including daily chapel services. He sits waiting for his mouth to be filled with large chunks of faith. But with morning chapel he is soon disillusioned; a hymn, Scripture, prayer and the benediction—what do these give him? So he begins to omit these services and to go out for coffee and doughnuts instead. He begins to cut this and then that from his schedule, including finally as many classes as he can with safety. All the while a resentment is building up in him. Something is wrong with this place. The faculty is a group of ogres, only interested in being tough on him in classwork and caring nothing about the spiritual life of the institution. And the worship services are obviously barren; more ritual, more communion services and greater preachers than those available are needed to speak to him directly about his spiritual life.

The last thing that ever seems to occur to our typical student is that he himself may be at fault. It never occurs to him that the role of the passive parasite which he assumes is the real cause of his problem. A parasite is defined as one who lives on or in another organism and derives its nourishment therefrom. In other words, it may live well, but it has no glory whatever. Actually our student has yet to learn the simplest and most obvious truth about Christian devotion. This is that no one can form the knowledge of God in him by preachments or prayers, by maneuvers in curriculum or even improved relations with the faculty. We'll give you all we've got, but that is not enough to make a Christian out of you. Christian knowledge involves requirement. God will give his gifts to those who actively participate, but from those who will not he will take away. That is a law of the spiritual life. Any worship is barren to him who sits passively; it is meaningful only to him who actively worships, who participates inwardly and with his whole being. Any community life is unwholesome, even when labelled "Christian," if it is a mere association of passive individualists, each of whom is waiting for someone to do something for him, or to give him something. What is more dull and unhealthy than an association of people sitting around a doctor's office? The Christian is one who, I repeat, does not indulge in community life, BUT MAKES IT. He is one who in Christ can see God through him making a heaven in hell. Will it be said of you, then, that you have been God's agents in creating a community of Christ? If you are truly of God, if you truly would know God, then wherever you are you will be actively at work in breaking down the walls which alienate, in order to form community. You will understand



that the weakness of the faculty, who are simply human beings like yourself, can be overcome by God's working through an active community by the Holy Spirit. But God's first enemy is you; it is each of us as individuals who perpetually want but will not actively obey.

To summarize, then, the knowledge of God is not a static faith, nor simply a series of feelings or ideas. It is something to be done; it involves the movement of the will, the acknowledgement of God's claim, the passionate concern for what God wants. And what God wants is more than that we be good; it is also a willingness to be hurt, as Christ was hurt, for his sake. Knowledge involves me in God's community of life, in which I am a sinner among sinners, but to which God has given the wonder of all wonders, the gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

## ENCOUNTER IN JAPAN

### EMIL BRUNNER—AN INTERPRETATION

I. JOHN HESSELINK

On July 2, 1955, Dr. Emil Brunner, his wife and Miss Iris Bruns<sup>1</sup> sailed from Yokohama, Japan. As the ship, bound for Europe, slipped out of the harbor, an unusual but moving scene took place. Instead of the usual parting shouts and farewells the crowd of Japanese and American friends gathered at the dock began to sing a hymn<sup>2</sup>—the majestic strains of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," the Brunners' favorite hymn.

Those who had gathered there, representing countless thousands whose lives had been touched by the Brunners, were struck with a sense of loss and regret. This was truly "farewell" to this admirable couple who twice since the war had given a part of their lives for the spread of the gospel in Japan. The first visit had been brief—from October to December in 1949. The second was of longer duration, from October of 1953 to July 1955, cut short only by Mrs. Brunner's illness. During these visits they had so endeared themselves to both the Japanese Church and the foreign missionary community that there was almost the feeling that no one could fill the vacancy. And yet there was gratitude that they were able to return to Zurich, for these past two years had been hard and exacting in many ways.

Only those intimately associated with the Brunners during their stay here in Japan can appreciate what was involved in their coming. Despite the fact that Japan is remarkably advanced in literary and industrial fields, possessing a rich culture and a standard of living far superior to most Asian countries, the missionary "mortality rate" is higher here than anywhere else in the world. This is not due to lack of results, for the response to the Christian faith, although small, is yet steady. Rather the baffling and complex nature of the society and culture, an impenetrable resistance

1. Elmer G. Homrighausen in his tribute to Brunner's decision to go to Japan erroneously stated that the Brunners were taking with them their "daughter-in-law" who had married their youngest son recently killed in a train accident. ("Brunner Goes To Japan," *Theology Today*, January, 1954, p. 537.) The truth is that Miss Bruns was *engaged* to be married to the Brunners' son, but the marriage was not realized because of the latter's untimely death. Miss Bruns had been a neighbor of the Brunners since childhood and was like a daughter to them.
2. There was nothing unusual about this for Japanese Christians always sing when one of their number departs on a train or ship. But they always sing the same hymn, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

to an all-out break with old mores and beliefs, and problems peculiar to the Japanese Church make Christian witnessing in this country strangely difficult and frustrating. This has broken many strong, young men. Dr. Brunner, on the other hand, came to Japan at the age of 63, not the age in which most people begin their missionary endeavors!

In addition, the Brunners had come soon after the tragic death of their son, Thomas, who was killed in a rail accident. He was the second of the Brunners' four sons who died on the threshold of a career. To leave home at such a time made their coming even more noteworthy. Also in contrast to a typical new missionary who lives in close contact with others of the same age and background, the Brunners were practically isolated on the International Christian University (ICU) campus which is in the country.

The barrier of the Japanese language was another great factor. Japanese is not a language that can be "picked up" even by one who spends years in the country. Hence, except in cases where there were those who could understand English,<sup>3</sup> speeches to Japanese groups had to be translated. And speaking through an interpreter is a trying, uninspiring experience. Fortunately, the Brunners all spoke English of a charming and fresh quality. Consequently, it might appear that there would be no strain at this point. Yet this actually was a tremendous burden for Dr. Brunner especially, for he confessed that after extended lectures and conversations in English he was exhausted.

Another consideration the "outsider" could not appreciate is the actual physical hardship endured particularly by Dr. Brunner during his two winters here. Japan's winters in the Tokyo area are no more severe than in Switzerland or the midwestern United States, but in Japan, even in large modern schools and churches, there is no central heating! Sometimes there would be a little pot-bellied stove in one corner of the room, but often tries even the more hardy Japanese. I well recall sitting in an un-lecture in such rooms for two and three hours is an endurance feat that often tries even the more hardy Japanese. I well recall sitting in an un-heated classroom at ICU for three consecutive hours in an overcoat, fingers numb and breath frosty while Dr. Brunner lectured on existentialism—without overcoat and without complaint! He paid the price for his courage, for he was often plagued by colds, attacks of flu, and occasionally lost his voice.

When all this is understood the fundamental question recurs with even greater intensity. Why did Emil Brunner come (or return) to Japan? The

3. In Japan this number is sizable among younger people. English is a required subject from grammar school through high school. However, considering this, very few people can speak even passable English. This is due to a poor method of teaching English which produces readers but not conversationalists.

immediate cause, of course, was the invitation from ICU for him to be its first professor in the chair of Christianity. But on a deeper level the question may still be raised—what induced Dr. Brunner to resign his chair at the University of Zurich to take this post in Japan? When asked that question before he left Zurich he replied:

"I go with the firm decision to give myself whole-heartedly to the task of helping make Japan a Christian country. This is my only purpose and motive. . . To those who cannot understand how anyone can leave his own University and pulpit to begin afresh in a foreign land, I would mention that there is an even graver shortage of theological teachers in Japan than there is in Switzerland, and after forty years' service in the Church at Zurich and my fifty-ninth term as a professor at Zurich University, it is really my own affair if I wish to spend a few of the last years God will give me on the missionary battle-front. Only one thing matters—to bring Christ in the Far East a host of disciples as numerous, and above all as strong and obedient in the faith, as can possibly be achieved. How far we shall succeed is in His hands alone. But I would ask all those who have the spreading of the Kingdom of God and the lordship of Christ at heart to support us with their intercession."<sup>4</sup>

Under any circumstances these would be remarkable words. But coming from a world renowned theologian in his prime this testimony takes on added luster. This moved Elmer Homrighausen of Princeton to write: "Brunner's going to Japan is a sign which witnesses to the power of the Gospel at work *even*<sup>5</sup> in the heart of a systematic theologian. The theologian of our time is restless in his Zurich security. His theology will become even more influential now that it is sealed with this further step in holy obedience to Jesus Christ."<sup>6</sup>

After arriving in Japan, when Brunner was asked the same question in an interview,<sup>7</sup> he elaborated further the factors that made Japan the choice for implementing personally his "missionary theology." He mentioned first that he had been strongly impressed "by the potentiality of the Christian mission in Japan and by the strategic cultural importance of the country, not only for the Far East but all of Asia." This situation was made more urgent by Brunner's concern about totalitarianism—"the main problem of our times"—which threatens Japan. The vacuum that existed

4. Quoted by Elmer G. Homrighausen, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

5. Italics mine. In the case of most theologians the "even" might often express the proverbial ivory-tower existence of the theologian and philosopher. In the case of Brunner this is not so exceptional in the light of his recent emphasis on "missionary theology" which will be examined later.

6. Homrighausen, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

7. Emil Brunner, "Why I Returned To Japan," an interview by James A. Scherer, *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, January, 1954, pp. 14-17.

in Japan after the war would be filled by totalitarianism, Brunner felt, unless Christianity filled it first.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Brunner believed that in a particular way he might be able to help at a weak point in Japanese Christianity. For Brunner had observed that "what Japanese Christianity lacks is an interpretation to the intellectual of this age."<sup>9</sup>

This task of the "mutual interpretation of the problems of everyday life with the gospel, and of the gospel with the problems of everyday life" is one in which Brunner has long had a special interest. In the interview he mentioned as illustrative of this concern his three books, *Justice in the Social Order*, *Man in Revolt*, and *Revelation and Reason*. To this could well be added his more recent Gifford Lectures published in two volumes under the title *Christianity and Civilization*. In these lectures he considers everything from the problem of being or reality to economic issues, culture, and creativity.<sup>10</sup>

In his most recent book, *Eternal Hope*, this personal concern which has become more and more dominant in recent years is expressed poignantly. He explains that this eschatological study was not attempted primarily in view of the theological situation. Nor was the coming Assembly of the World Council of Churches the main determinative factor. Rather it was the great personal sorrow that resulted from the accidental death of his son in the summer of 1952 that made the theological problem (i.e. of the Christian hope) "a burning issue of personal life. . . . This outline of an eschatology. . . is the fruit of the wrestlings of a simple believing Christian, who, assailed by the sorrowful experience of death, has sought the consolation of the Gospel."<sup>11</sup>

The answer to the question, "Why did Emil Brunner come to Japan?" is now clearer. A sense of need, a vision of a challenge that was urgent plus an interest and concern in those particular areas constituted Brunner's "call" to Japan. However, the answer would not be complete without a brief examination of a concept which has come to be determinative in Brunner's thinking. That is the concept of "missionary theology" which has been alluded to earlier. An understanding of Brunner's choice of this expression greatly aids in understanding his theological approach and purpose as well.

8. However, contrary to much that was written after the war, neither Communism nor Christianity have filled this vacuum. The old religions have had a remarkable comeback and the rise of countless new Buddhist and Shinto sects, particularly in rural areas, have attracted many thousands of adherents.

9. Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

10. I first became aware of the existence of Emil Brunner in 1948, when in a philosophy of religion course at Central College, Vol. I of *Christianity and Civilization* was used as a text.

11. *Eternal Hope* (London: 1954), fly leaf.

Underlying this concept, however, is his understanding of apologetics or "eristics,"<sup>12</sup> a term Brunner prefers because of the "unfortunate suggestions" attached to the former word. A true apologetic (or eristics) is not a "defense" of the faith but an "attack," namely "of the Church on the opposing positions of unbelief, superstition, or misleading ideologies."<sup>13</sup> This does not mean primarily a concern about particular doctrines. Rather an apologetic is only necessary "where in the spiritual conflict the whole is at stake, not merely certain parts."<sup>14</sup> Hence whenever the faith of the Church is threatened great apologists have arisen. For Brunner the three great apologists were Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard.<sup>15</sup> For in these men is illustrated the approach and concern which has become Brunner's, i.e., not a mere rational demonstration of the truth of Christianity, but also a real attempt at "conversion." As over against traditional apologetics, here is an aggressive, polemical approach which "really gets to grips with the soul of man and wrestles with him, refusing to let him go until he has been brought to a decision one way or the other."<sup>16</sup>

Apologetics as thus conceived almost passes over into what Brunner terms "missionary theology." The latter goes one step further and seeks to integrate that which the man of the world already knows with the Christian Gospel. Brunner's book *Man in Revolt* is illustrative of this, for this "anthropological approach" is an attempt to start with man and his problems and wrestle with them in the light of the Christian faith. For the missionary starts with the spiritual situation of the hearer and seeks to address the Gospel in a relevant way to it.<sup>17</sup> The dogmatic theologian on the other hand is primarily concerned with an elucidation of his message. The auditor is not his first concern. Missionary theology, however, is a form of "conversation" between a believer and unbeliever. It "removes the hindrances which lie between the Gospel and the hearer—namely those hindrances which are accessible to intellectual reflection."<sup>18</sup> Here has been Brunner's great concern especially in recent years. Even his *Dog-*

12. This expression first occurred in *The Divine Imperative* (London: 1951). Concerning apologetics and Brunner's "missionary theology" cf. Denzil G. M. Patrick, *Pascal and Kierkegaard* (London: 1947), pp. 380-82.

13. *The Christian Doctrine of God, Dogmatics*, Vol. I (London: 1949), p. 98.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

15. Brunner cannot praise too highly Pascal's *Pensees*: "an unsurpassed model of discussion with the uneducated believer." But Soren Kierkegaard elicits even greater plaudits: "incomparably the greatest Apologist or 'eristic' thinker of the Christian Faith within the sphere of Protestantism." *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 100.

16. Denzil G. M. Patrick, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

17. Cf. "Where Does The Missionary Begin?" by Allen Cabaniss in *Theology Today*, April, 1954. This is a pertinent article dealing with this very aspect of "missionary theology."

18. *Dog.* Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

*matics*, which because of their very nature are concerned first of all with clarifying the Christian message, are always written with the outside world, the world of doubt and unbelief, in the background. Hence the call to Japan was a real challenge to enact the tenets of his own position.<sup>19</sup>

A corollary question to that of the "why" of his coming might be that of the effect or results of his two year stay in Japan. How did Brunner seek to implement his "missionary theology" in the given situation, Japan, and to what extent was he successful? The latter part of the question, of course, admits of no ready answer. That he made an immeasurable and profound impact is patent. Not only amongst missionaries, Japanese ministers and theological students but also amongst lay folk and surprising numbers of non-Christians the name "Brunner" found a quick response. The name alone was sufficient to command respect in academic circles, and in a country where academic prestige counts for so much, the presence of an internationally known figure was enough to enhance the reputation of the influential but numerically almost insignificant Christian forces.<sup>20</sup>

His immediate responsibility was as a teacher to ICU. There his most popular course was one in basic Christian doctrines expressed in the simplest of terms. The last term he taught the course 250 students were registered with between 50-100 auditors also always present. This course has attracted more students than any other course in the University thus far. In contrast, his most "scholarly" course was one in "Existentialism," a lecture and seminar for graduate students on Saturday mornings.

I had the opportunity of attending the "Existentialism" lectures and two-hour seminar and found the former to be a model of the lecture method, the latter a "sparkling" session in which the members did far more talking than their leader. Regardless of the difficulty of the problem, Dr. Brunner's analyses and explanations were invariably clear and incisive. The vast resources he could marshal to support or illustrate a position were impressive. History, literature, philosophy, music, and even aspects of certain technical fields formed the background which reminded us again and again that here was a giant, a man certainly deserving of his reputation.

However, it was not his massive scholarship that made the greatest impact. Perhaps an even greater witness was given in the chapel where Brunner gave chapel talks and preached every other Sunday. His sermons, like his more fundamental lectures, were models of simplicity, so that if there were any complaints about his messages it was never that they were

19. Nevertheless, this precious jewel of consistency, i.e., enacting or fulfilling the implications of one's own position, is rare especially among theologians and ministers.

20. The Christian Church in Japan (including Roman Catholics) numbers only one half of one per cent of the population.



too difficult. In addition, on his own initiative, he organized informal extra-curricular Bible classes for the students and also one for the faculty members. He did everything possible to make ICU a Christian University in spirit as well as in name. The Brunners as a family gave unstintedly of their time and shared their home with any student or group of students who presented any excuse for a visit. I recall too many occasions where faculty homes in Christian institutions in the United States were impenetrable houses surrounded by mystery. By contrast, most of the times I had occasion to go to the Brunner home I found it "overflowing" with students, giving more the impression of a student center than a private home.

However, lectures in theological seminaries and universities throughout the country and innumerable addresses given at varied conferences made it necessary for Dr. Brunner to be off the campus much of the time. He spoke to thousands in Japan's largest public hall. But he was also always willing to speak to small groups of every kind. The following groups are only representative: the Kyodan (United Church) Occupational Evangelism Committee, the National Church School Convention, Christian College religious emphasis weeks, missionary conferences and retreats of many larger denominations and even a women's assembly at a U.S. Army Chapel. These constant invitations were accepted graciously by Dr. Brunner but over a two-year period meant a severe physical strain.

A marked characteristic in these lectures and addresses, beside that of forthright simplicity, was Brunner's boldness. His occasional blunt, sharp attacks and criticisms sometimes shocked and disturbed his listeners, but he said many necessary things which others have dared not say. His stand on Communism was adamant. This cannot be appreciated until one understands the social-political climate in Japan.<sup>21</sup> Yet one of his most popular series of lectures was on "Justice, Freedom, and Society," in reality a Christian polemic against Communism.

Even greater controversy was aroused by Brunner's criticisms of the Japanese Church, particularly the Kyodan, and his friendliness toward a non-church movement known as the Mukyokai. This is an unusual phenomenon, characteristic largely of Japan, although similar groups can be found in Korea and other countries. It has no denominational organization or clerical system, no meeting halls nor anything that would distinguish it

21. A Japanese pastor told the writer that it is taken for granted that almost every economics student is a Marxist. Communist cells flourish on almost every large university campus. The demagogues who get a hearing in Japan are not the McCarthys who carry on witch-hunts but the anti-American rabble rousers. Many of the Christian leaders are supporters of the right wing socialist party. All this does not mean that Japan is as a country pro-Communist or in serious danger of turning to the left. However, this should indicate that an entirely different frame of mind is dominant which means that in academic circles Communism is usually "soft-pedaled."



as "church" in the usual sense of the word. Its strength is its strong Biblical emphasis and Biblical scholarship. Its great weakness, apart from its antipathy to the organized church, is its nationalism. According to one of its own adherents:

"Its leaders, who are firmly assured of their direct calling by God, have Sunday meetings mostly in their own homes where the attendants eagerly listen to expository lectures on the Holy Scriptures which not infrequently last two hours or more. In addition several of these leaders publish monthly Biblical magazines or periodicals. . . . Their attitude toward the "church" is largely one of indifference. . . . They have no formal creed or confession, although the actual contents of their faith are quite evangelical, even orthodox, except at this very point of the church."<sup>22</sup>

In this unique group, Brunner found much that to him resembles the New Testament *ecclesia* more than the organized church.<sup>23</sup> Although his purpose was to work with both sides and get them to cooperate, his sharp criticisms of the organized church were considered "traitorous" by certain Japanese and missionary leaders.<sup>24</sup> However, despite his unrelenting attacks on the Japanese church for being cold, stymied by inertia and lacking an evangelistic dynamic, his constructive advice and sincere concern overcame most of the antagonism aroused by his criticisms.

Notwithstanding the significance of all these contributions, the most telling impact was the most intangible. Especially for the missionary community it was the personality of Brunner as a man and the witness of the Brunners as a family which will never be forgotten. He was in a singular way a missionary to the missionaries! His counsel, discerning and provoca-

22. Koki Nakazawa, "Churchless Christianity in Japan," *The Japan Christian Year Book* (Tokyo: 1954).
23. This is particularly true in the case of the Japanese Church where rigid, inflexible patterns make spontaneity, warmth and fellowship very difficult. Brunner's attraction to the Mukyokai can be further explained by his own low estimate of the significance of the sacraments plus the fact that some of the outstanding Biblical scholars in Japan are Mukyokai adherents.
24. Although Brunner also recognized the limits of an unorganized non-church movement, he frequently gave the impression that there was far more real Christian faith and fellowship in this group than in the church. Cf. his note in *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (Philadelphia: 1953) p. 131. The Mukyokai (i.e., non-church groups) "have no doubt done as much for the success of the Christian mission in Japan as have the official churches." Although I am in agreement with Brunner's criticisms of the Japanese Church, I yet feel that this statement is inaccurate and misleading. Brunner's experiences were mostly with its clergy and leaders. Had he been able to share with me some of my recent preaching experiences in mining towns and small country churches he too would have been thrilled by a warmth of fellowship and a spirit of sharing typical of the New Testament *ecclesia* at its best.

tive lectures, sympathetic and warm concern made him the most loved and popular guest to Japan since the war. His addresses to missionary conferences invariably aroused excited and sometimes heated debates. But his honesty and humility, willingness to admit mistakes and retract overstatements made him a figure of fond admiration even amongst those who knew or cared nothing about his theology or theology in general. And his flashing smile, disarming unaffectedness and sparkling sense of humor delighted everyone.<sup>25</sup>

Those who had known Brunner first through his books found him to be so different from the impression sometimes gained from his writings that the personal encounter was a constant source of amazement. It should be added that in the past, particularly when he was a visiting professor<sup>26</sup> prior to the war, Brunner was sometimes regarded as haughty and unpleasant. There were a few in Japan as well who were not always favorably impressed with his personality. But those who came to know him well found him to be the epitome of a Christian gentleman. When he visited with families and small groups of missionaries the conversation rarely was about theology. Politics, Japanese problems, church and mission school problems were obviously the things that Brunner delighted to discuss most. He made no attempt to "proselytize" and made every attempt to fulfill his vow—to interpret the problems of the Japanese church and society in terms of the gospel.<sup>27</sup>

25. Typical of his informality is the following incident. At a large missionary conference where Brunner was the featured speaker, each afternoon there was a question and answer session. The second afternoon the missionaries were slow in gathering (not uncommon!) and while the chairman fidgeted and became more and more nervous, Brunner suddenly stood, flashed his winsome smile and said: "Let's not waste our time together. I'm sure all of you like to sing," and proceeded to walk over to the piano. He sat down and with vigor "pounded out" a familiar hymn. The audience responded instantaneously and burst forth singing.

Of Brunner's physical appearance a word must be said in order to counteract the impression given by the terrible snapshot printed inside the back of the dust jacket of some of his works published by Westminster Press. That picture makes him look fierce and wild. Actually he has a kindly face which with his flowing white hair sets him off as a genial grandfather. He is short, but possesses a strong, husky body and a large head which is most impressive. I cannot refrain from noting his similarity—when he smiles—to a well known American figure who recently came to Japan—the colorful manager of the New York Yankees, Casey Stengel. However, Dr. Brunner is a much more handsome man.

26. Brunner confesses that on very few occasions he was not given a cordial reception when a guest in another institution.
27. A well known European writer after having written a famous work is reported to have turned away all his students' questions with: "Just read my book. It's in the book." This spirit was certainly not typical of Brunner.

The most delightful discovery of all was Emil Brunner the husband and father. One of the contributions a married missionary can make is that of the witness of his home. The Brunners impressed all who came to know them as beautiful examples of a Christian family at its best. Mrs. Brunner, a charming and accomplished woman in her own right, almost always accompanied her husband whenever he spoke, braving cold, endless social functions and late hours. Her concern for and understanding of his work was a source of inspiration for many a young missionary wife. He in turn was most considerate and appreciative of all she did and was. Miss Brunns was of inestimable help to both of them and was obviously the recipient of all the love they could manifest. They worked as a remarkable team, displaying in a singular way the meaning of Christian devotion and cooperation.

Those who had the opportunity to entertain the Brunners and who were in their home found them so unpretentious that it was easy to forget who these guests were. In this respect, one last trait might be noted—their love of children, particularly that of Dr. Brunner himself. If anything indicates the "bigness" of a man, it is this: he notices and enjoys children. To see the great Zurich theologian get excited over a new born baby or frolic on the floor with a child are memories that will be cherished by some proud young parents for a long, long time.

There are no doubt many other ways in which "missionary" Brunner fulfilled his call to Japan, but here at least are illustrations of the manifold ways in which Japan was touched by Dr. Brunner and his family.

There remains one question which I and others have been asked again and again during these past two years. That is, for those who enjoyed this personal "encounter" with Brunner, what were the conclusions reached concerning his theology.<sup>28</sup> The nature and scope of this paper will permit only a suggestive answer, one hardly more than a bibliography for those seriously concerned with this question.

As has been already suggested, with the exception of his lectures on Existentialism, his lectures and sermons were astoundingly basic and simple.<sup>29</sup> Hence one could listen to his sermons and lectures frequently and

28. The answer of course is largely determined by one's own background and theological position.

29. Readers in the United States will find a good illustration of his approach and emphasis in a sermon "The Mystery of 'I Am'" printed in *The Pulpit*, May, 1955. This sermon first given at the ICU chapel was preached in February, 1955, at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. The picture of Brunner on the cover of this issue is much better than that on the Westminster dust jacket but again is a bit stern and forbidding.

come away with the impression that his theology must be quite simple as well. The reason is that these messages were evangelistic in intent, not theological in the more technical sense of the term. However, to a discerning listener who was somewhat familiar with Brunner's method, a definite motif became apparent, particularly in the sermons. For a certain approach and theme underlay almost every message—the Buber-Ebnerian Personalism usually known as the "I-Thou" philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

Informal question and answer sessions at missionary conferences were usually more provocative and profitable from the standpoint of discerning Brunner's theology. Here the crucial questions of the relation of faith to history, revelation, the Bible, atonement and resurrection were discussed freely.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, if one wanted to be certain about his real position on any of these matters, it was finally necessary to read his books in which his more considered judgments could be found. Therefore, even for one who was in frequent contact with Brunner during his stay in Japan, if he wanted to understand Brunner's theology it was imperative that he study carefully Brunner's key writings, particularly *The Divine Human Encounter*, *Revelation and Reason*, and the *Dogmatics*.<sup>32</sup>

30. More will be said about this movement later. It should be noted, however, that Brunner's "Personalism" has nothing to do with the "Personalist" philosophy of Edgar Sheffield Brightman.

Brunner's "I-Thou" motif was so familiar in the sermons that they began to sound much the same after a while. These sermons were often masterpieces with respect to clarity, relevance and evangelistic drive, but at times one wondered whether the "Personal" theme determined Biblical exposition or vice versa. Cf. his questionable exegesis of: Rom. 5:12, *Dog.* Vol. II, p. 99; John 14:12, *Dog.* II, p. 325; Matt. 24:37, *Eternal Hope*, p. 140; and 2 Cor. 5:16, *The Mediator*, p. 156(n.). On the last text cf. also Elias Andrews, *The Meaning of Christ For Paul* (Nashville: 1949), p. 30. However, even conservative critics speak in praiseworthy terms about Brunner's stimulating exegesis in many areas.

31. Some of these sessions were to say the least exciting! Brunner would arouse the ire of the old time liberals by emphasizing the Cross and Incarnation and making deprecatory remarks about the significance of the teachings and example of Jesus. The "social-action" people also were stung. Arminians became excited about his stress on election. Conservatives as well were alarmed by his view of the Bible, radical criticism, debunking the empty tomb and denial of the virgin birth. One moment Brunner would insist that one must believe a certain doctrine simply because "the Bible said so," and the next minute he would confound the audience by saying "There is nothing I have to believe." After an hour of this the place was usually in an uproar.
32. I have been reading Brunner's works since college days in 1948, and have read intensively almost everything of Brunner's in English this past two years. Yet I would be the first to confess that just about the time I think I understand how Brunner stands—for example on the crucial problem of history—I am unsettled by finding a new problem on rereading an old passage.

Only thus could be avoided the superficial and facile judgments which were made too often on the basis of hearing one series of lectures. After these sessions little groups would gather, some concluding that Brunner was really "quite orthodox." They conceded that he was not at all sympathetic to the verbal inspiration of the Bible but yet seemed to hold firmly to the central doctrines.<sup>33</sup> Yet liberals who heard the same messages would just as often conclude that in reality Brunner was in their camp. Some fundamentalists, who had come expecting to hear the worst were disappointed, but yet departed uneasy. Consequently, the presence of Brunner often only served to confirm the prejudices or sympathies of those who heard him.

This confusion about Brunner's true position is not a new phenomenon. In 1933, when the names Barth and Brunner were still largely unknown in the U.S., Holmes Rolston<sup>34</sup> wrote—*A Conservative Looks to Barth and Brunner*. Rolston himself maintained "the orthodox position of the Written Word" (p. 101) but was yet optimistic about the "new Swiss theologians" relative to their strengthening the orthodox cause. Charles Clayton Morrison, a former editor and now contributing editor of *The Christian Century* was equally optimistic, but for the opposite reason! He saw in the new movement nothing but "an extension and development of the spirit and method of liberalism."<sup>35</sup> However, two years later in the same journal a cry arose much more typical of the liberal response to the new theology. For in response to Brunner's *The Scandal of Christianity*, William Hudnut Jr.<sup>36</sup> wrote a sharp rebuttal titled "The Scandal of Dogmatism." His was the typical complaint that Brunner denied man's real responsibility and freedom by his negative and "dogmatic" emphasis on man's sin and inability.

A contemporary reaction of those who have rejected both the old liberalism and orthodoxy is that Brunner more and more falls on the orthodox side. Edwin Lewis refers to Brunner's position in *Revelation and Reason* as "the new Biblicism"<sup>37</sup> and Nels Ferre complains that Brunner is on the verge of becoming a non-literalist Fundamentalist!<sup>38</sup> But at the same time certain evangelicals are becoming more certain that Brunner

33. Even some fundamentalists were heard to remark: "He sounds just like us." And a reading of his brilliant little book *Our Faith* would do nothing to change that impression.

34. Now head of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.

35. June 7, 1950, p. 697.

36. Then a Presbyterian minister in Rochester; *The Christian Century*, July 9, 1952, pp. 802-3.

37. *The Biblical Faith and Christian Freedom* (Nashville: 1953), p. 47.

38. "Present Trends in Protestant Thought," *Religion in Life*, 17:343. Cited in Paul King Jewett, *Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation* (London: 1954), p. 164.

cannot be counted as one of them. Gordon H. Clark of Butler University accuses Brunner of "epistemological relativism" and contends that Brunner makes "assertations that can hardly fail to lead to skepticism."<sup>39</sup> And Carl Henry of Fuller Theological Seminary after acknowledging the merits of neo-supernaturalism yet concludes that Brunner and Barth have "dissolved the authority of the written revelation into a vague mysticism."<sup>40</sup> More impressive is the warning of the moderate and highly competent English New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce: "In more ways than one the new orthodoxy must be on its guard against becoming in reality a new modernism."<sup>41</sup>

That Nels Ferre and Carl Henry come to the opposite conclusions about Brunner's position is not too surprising in view of their widely divergent theological views. Yet there is something in the very nature of Brunner's position and manner of writing that lends itself to mistaken impressions. This is true of all the dialectical writers, but particularly so of Brunner. Now he seems to be orthodox, now a liberal of the liberals,

39. *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: 1952), p. 297.

40. *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology* (Boston: 1950) p. 101. Henry's *The Protestant Dilemma* (Grand Rapids: 1949), contains a lengthy discussion of Brunner's position. Brunner had this book in the library which he brought to Japan and he acknowledged that it was a fair, honest attempt to describe his position. Henry, although very critical of Brunner's theology yet can write: "Few contemporary theologians with whom conservative Christianity is in vital disagreement can teach the critical evangelical reader so much, by interaction and reaction, as Emil Brunner of Zurich." p. 57. That Henry himself has so profited is evidenced by the quotations from Brunner he uses to support his own position in his *Notes on the Doctrine of God* (Boston: 1948).

41. *The Evangelical Quarterly*, April '53, p. 65.

The phrase "New Modernism" brings to mind Cornelius Van Til's book of the same title. Although Van Til is one of the few who understands the underlying neo-Kantian and existential philosophical principles behind dialecticism, he vitiates his own case by a loose handling of quotations and forcing Barth and Brunner into fantastic positions by making logical deductions from their philosophical principles. Even Henry defends Barth and Brunner by saying of Van Til: "Thinkers are not as consistent with their premises as all this, and the 'blessed inconsistency' in the neo-supernaturalists sometimes brings them into more interaction with Biblical theology than Van Til would suppose." *Fifty Years of Protestant Theology*, p. 96. Van Til's bitter attack on Barth and Brunner has evoked even sharper words from the brilliant young Scotch theologian T. F. Torrance: "The proud flaunting of his [Van Til's] rationality on almost every page points to a mind which has not yet learned that the Cross makes foolish the wisdom of the world. We need men today who will engage in fearless and sincere debate, but polemic of this kind with a strange lack of sympathy and an inability to understand the other man's point of view without distorting it beyond all recognition, can do no service to Christian theology." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, March, 1954, p. 108.

leaving the average reader highly confused.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, my great concern is that none of the readers of this paper will fall into the snare of imagining that Brunner can be quickly disposed of by regarding him as just another liberal in disguise, a sheep in wolf's clothing, or as a modern day version of orthodoxy.<sup>43</sup> As soon as one labels Brunner either liberal or orthodox, he fails to appreciate the unique nature of dialectical thought, particularly Brunner's variety of it. Any fair critic must confess that no one has been more critical of the old liberalism than Brunner. J. Gresham Machen in *Christianity and Liberalism* was no more incisive in his attacks on liberalism in his day than Brunner in our own.

However, it is much more difficult to convince some readers that Brunner is just as unalterably opposed to orthodoxy<sup>44</sup> despite his plain remarks in the preface to Vol. II of his *Dogmatics*: "It is only on these lines (that of the "I-Thou" philosophy) that Christian thought can be saved from the rigidity of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and the results of Biblical criticism can be made fruitful for the shaping of Christian doctrine." Later he refers to the "sterile and false contrast between Liberalism and Orthodoxy" and "the rigidity and ethical sterility of orthodoxy."<sup>45</sup> And with these remarks he rejects far more than the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible or verbal inspiration.<sup>46</sup>

42. This has caused even a careful student of Brunner's works, Paul K. Jewett, to complain about "the zigzag of Brunner's thought." *op. cit.*, p. 167, n. 41.

43. Nothing is more fallacious than to imagine that when Brunner stresses the words "existential" and "encounter" this is only his reaction to a dead orthodoxy where intellectual belief in creeds is substituted for a vital, personal faith. That Brunner feels strongly about this it is true, but such an explanation only "skirts" the significance of these words in Brunner's method and thought.

44. Brunner likes to think of himself as a true son of the Reformation and a spiritual heir of Luther and Calvin. And although his attack is particularly leveled against 17th century Calvinistic and Lutheran orthodoxy and contemporary forms of European state-church orthodoxy and American fundamentalism, this again does not evade the question. For Brunner is against orthodoxy of any kind, even at its best. He regards himself as an evangelical, however, and claims to represent true New Testament and Reformation Christianity.

45. *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (London: 1952).

46. This notion is so lightly cast aside these days as a fundamentalist "hangover" from pre-scientific days that it is well to listen to the sobering words of T. F. Torrance of New College Edinburgh (he himself rejects the position). In a review of B. B. Warfield's *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, he remarks: "It is becoming clear . . . that there is much more to the old doctrine of verbal inspiration than at first appeared, and that no proper doctrine of the nature and authority of Holy Scripture can afford to neglect the profound element of truth which that doctrine, held alike by Romanist and Protestant Scholastic theology, enshrined." *Scottish Journal of Theology*, March, 1954, p. 106.



Brunner from the beginning has accepted the most radical Biblical criticism.<sup>47</sup> Although in his most recent works he accepts fewer critical hypotheses, he still accepts the old Wellhausen hypothesis for the Old Testament. He concedes that the Gospel of John "provides more reliable historical detail than was thought to be possible half a century ago,"<sup>48</sup> but not only the Fourth Gospel but also the Synoptics "narrate much that is not historical" and "contain legendary features."<sup>49</sup> The Genesis narrative of the creation and fall is mythical, the Biblical world-view is erroneous, the virgin birth is not only an unnecessary but a dangerous doctrine,<sup>50</sup> the empty tomb is one more "legendary touch" upon which our faith must not be based,<sup>51</sup> Jesus' post-resurrection ministry and bodily ascension are again critically suspect and similar instances where "theology must have the courage to be ready to abandon the ecclesiastical tradition."<sup>52</sup> If the reader still wants to believe that Brunner's position is but a "refined" version of Reformation theology he may do so, but this evidence is hardly incidental.

On the other side it would be possible to enumerate in similar fashion Brunner's emphasis on revelation, high Christology,<sup>53</sup> brilliant explication of the necessity and nature of the atonement, the centrality of the cross, the necessity of the resurrection,<sup>54</sup> view of the exaltation and kingship of Christ, insistence on a final judgment and vehement repudiation

47. "Let me say that I myself am an adherent of a rather radical school of Biblical criticism, which for example, does not accept the Gospel of John as an historical source and which finds legends in many parts of the synoptic gospels." *The Theology of Crisis* (New York: 1931).

48. *Dog*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 246 and 356. cf. also the very recent *Eternal Hope* where he asserts again that "many individual features of the Jesus tradition are legendary" and others "have been distorted through the faith of the church."

50. Brunner does not eliminate the virgin birth primarily on critical grounds but for theological reasons. According to him this is an attempt to rationalize the incarnation and take away its mystery. He insists that he is not trying to undermine the deity of Christ for "Jesus IS 'by nature' God . . . The fight against this view (the virgin birth) is usually carried on by those who do not believe in the divinity of Christ, by modern Adoptionism, which in theological terms is called 'Liberalism.' It should be clear from the tenor of these remarks, that our rejection of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth has nothing to do with this view, but comes from the very opposite angle." *Ibid.*, p. 356.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 365-372. cf. also *Eternal Hope*, Chap. 15, "The Resurrection."

52. *Ibid.*, p. 373.

53. It would be hard to surpass the magnificent sections in the *Dog*, Vol. II concerning the person and work of Christ. Cf. pp. 250, 1; 275-286; 326, 7; 348; 357; 374.

54. "A Jesus who had not risen, who had remained in the grave, could not be the Christ. The Resurrection is the necessary vindication of His Messiahship." *Dog*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 366.



of Barth's, or any other form of, universalism. Brunner would be quick to add that no one should be surprised at this for his is a "theology of the Word," based on revelation alone. And this revelation is only found in the Bible, for "we possess the historical revelation of God in the Old Covenant and in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Scriptures alone."<sup>55</sup>

However, as long as we deal with Brunner in this piece-meal fashion with grocery-like lists of pros and cons, we will be far from the core and matrix of this theology. Only when Brunner's thesis and basic approach (which he tries to work out in his *Dogmatics*) is understood can one begin to appreciate the significance and uniqueness of his thought.<sup>56</sup>

At this point Cornelius Van Til is far more observant than most of the men who have become concerned about Brunner. The philosophical and epistemological foundation and presuppositions of Brunner's method (or Barth's), not his individual pronouncements on this or that doctrine will in the last analysis be the criterion for evaluating that theology. Few writers, whether sympathetic or critical of Brunner's theology seem to be aware of this. The clue is to be found in the book which was really the turning point in his whole approach: *The Divine Human Encounter* (1938), which title in the German actually means "truth as encounter."<sup>57</sup> This discovery, Brunner feels, really represents the Biblical understanding of truth and is the only way to avoid the false subject-object antithesis the Church and Western philosophy inherited from the Greeks. Based on the philosophy of Ferdinand Ebner<sup>58</sup> and Martin Buber<sup>59</sup> (the "I-Thou" philosophy), which is fused with a Kierkegaardian dialectic, Brunner has developed a theology which can rightly make a claim to be unique. It was

55. *Revelation and Reason* (Philadelphia: 1946), p. 273. This statement could be buttressed by many others which assert the indispensability of the Bible. One passage will suffice: "Christians come from the Bible . . . there are Christians because of the Bible. The Bible is the soil from which all Christian faith grows . . . Christian faith is faith in Christ, and Christ meets us and speaks to us in the Bible. Christian faith is Bible faith." *Our Faith* (London: 1951) p. 17.

56. For instance, to refer to Brunner's theology as "Barthianism" as is commonly done is utterly misleading. Brunner acknowledges their agreement on many basic issues but is greatly concerned about Barth's "hardening orthodoxy" which he feels is a most unfortunate trend in the latter's thought. Even the usually accurate Carl Henry makes the mistake of referring to Brunner as Barth's former student. *The Protestant Dilemma*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

57. Cf. William Horder, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (New York: 1955) pp. 135-144, for an unusually clear outline of Brunner's theology, particularly of the practical meaning of the "I-Thou" philosophy. He mentions neither Ebner or Kierkegaard however, thus giving the impression that only Buber has greatly influenced Brunner's approach. On "encounter" cf. also E. L. Allen, "A Theology of Involvement," *Theology Today*, July, 1954, pp. 179f.

58. The only writer I know of who has understood the significance of Ebner is Paul K. Jewett of the Gordon Divinity School. Cf. his penetrating article,

Kierkegaard who "opened the door to the New Testament," and almost all of Brunner's categories are Kierkegaardian. Considerably later the discovery of the "I-Thou" philosophy of Ebner and Buber—a Copernican turning point in the history of thought—came to be more determinative in Brunner's later works and modified some of the sharp existential positions of Kierkegaard.

Buber, Ebner, Kierkegaard—these names are the key to the understanding of Brunner and his "Personal" emphasis. He has tried to put it simply: "You cannot understand the Gospel unless you let yourself be personally engaged, which is the same as being challenged by the Thou which you encounter."<sup>60</sup> In relation to the Bible he has also expressed this Personalism in this way: "The Word of Scripture is truth but not, as all other truth aims at being, a truth representing an objective condition of things, but formative, subjective personal truth which claims me and moves out to meet me, truth in its twofold personal movement: God's movement towards me, the aim of which is to inspire my movement toward Him."<sup>61</sup>

When one has grasped these fundamental concepts he might think that the task of analyzing Brunner's position would then be fairly simple.<sup>62</sup> This might be true if he consistently applied his thesis and its implications to every area he treats. After having read Kierkegaard and Buber many of Brunner's seemingly contradictory positions and statements do begin to make sense. Nevertheless, certain problems remain and these are by no

"Ebnerian Personalism and Its Influence Upon Brunner's Theology," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1952. Ebner, almost unknown in the United States, discovered the "I-Thou" concept almost simultaneously and independently of the now renowned Martin Buber. Jewett further discusses the influence of Ebner, Buber and Kierkegaard in his recent book, *Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation*, the most profound and thorough analysis of Brunner's theology in the English language.

59. For an explication of Buber's philosophy cf. "The Religion of Martin Buber," *Theology Today*, July, 1955.
60. "A Spiritual Autobiography," given by request at the Kyodan-related missionary conference this past spring (April 1, 1955), and printed later in *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, July, 1955, pp. 238-244.
61. *Eternal Hope*, *op. cit.*, p. 184. This statement expresses in a "nutshell" the quintessence of the meaning of "truth as encounter" and merits serious reflection.
62. There are several other personalities and factors behind Brunner which help to explain his development, but they cannot be more than named here. In his "Spiritual Autobiography" he acknowledges his great debt to Christoph Blumhardt (also in *Divine-Human Encounter*, p. 40), Herman Kutter, "who more than anybody else influenced me as he did Karl Barth," and Leonhard Ragaz, Brunner's professor at Zurich University.

means peripheral. The greatest and most fundamental of these is Brunner's understanding of faith and history.<sup>63</sup> For despite the typical dialectical claims of once-for-all, historical, Biblical revelation, as long as Brunner holds to the Kierkegaardian time/eternity dialectic, history would of necessity be in the sphere of the relative. Since revelation is the communication of absolute truth, if the eternal becomes historical we then have an impossible situation, i.e., the absolutizing of the relative. But faith can never rely on the relative. Kierkegaard would of course say that this is a part of the "scandal," the "offense" of the Incarnation, but the problem remains as to whether there was any real incarnation. Earlier statements of Brunner in *The Theology of Crisis*<sup>64</sup> and *The Mediator*<sup>65</sup> gave cause for real alarm.

Happily, Brunner has modified this radical Kierkegaardian dualism and has considerably rectified his position concerning the importance of Jesus' life and teaching and the oneness of the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of faith. In *Revelation and Reason* (p. 284) he admits that Althaus is right in criticizing him for underestimating the Biblical picture of the story of Jesus. And in the *Dogmatics and Eternal Hope* he stresses the significance of the prophetic office of Christ<sup>66</sup> and unequivocally asserts that "the historical Jesus is no other than the Christ to whom the Apostles bear witness."<sup>67</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem of history still remains. At the midpoint, the cross, Brunner appears to be anchored in firm historical ground, but the beginning and end have a dubious relation to chronological, this-worldly history. Brunner's Christo-centric view of creation seems too narrow for the larger Biblical view. Concerning the end he makes many fine state-

63. Cf. the excellent discussion of this problem by Richard C. Oudersluys, "Biblical History and Faith," *The Western Seminary Bulletin*, September, 1953.

64. "The Word of God in the Scriptures is as little to be identified with the words of the Scriptures, as the Christ according to the flesh is to be identified with the Christ according to the spirit." p. 19.

65. "Faith presupposes, as a matter of course, a priori, that the Jesus of history is not the same as the Christ of faith." p. 184. After quoting this statement D. M. Baillie immediately adds, "There could hardly be a more radical rejection of the Jesus of history than that." *God Was in Christ* (New York: 1948) p. 35.

66. *Dog.* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 277. "All the Sayings of Jesus are fully of this 'Messianic' authority and actuality." Also p. 282, "The whole historical life of Jesus is the Way to the Cross."

67. *Ibid.*, p. 327. Cf. also pp. 348, 9 Cf. also chapter 7, "History and Saving History" and chapter 4 of *Eternal Hope*, "Faith and History."

ments which seem to indicate his belief in an actual, personal, coming again of Christ in glory which will mean the end of the world and the final judgment.<sup>68</sup> But then I am completely at a loss to understand the following passage which undercuts the previous impression.

"This expectation (that of an imminent Parousia and the end of the world) does not think out radically enough . . . the thought of an end of history. Rather it makes the attempt at least in one respect to conceive the Parousia as an event within history by thinking of the Day of the Lord as a day of earthly history, just as the Old Testament creation story similarly describes the day of creation as a first day in cosmic earthly history. In both ways we must think more radically and take more seriously the thought of the immeasurability between the temporal-earthly and the eternal-heavenly. As little as we can inscribe the day of creation as the first day in cosmic chronology, so little can we inscribe the day of the Parousia as the last day."<sup>69</sup>

The problem of the resurrection remains equally baffling,<sup>70</sup> and Brunner's view of revelation as necessarily indirect involves difficulties also in his doctrine of God. For Brunner the Athanasian Creed is unsatisfactory because it places the Persons of the Trinity "alongside" of each other. If the Father and the Son are thus equated the Father can only be what He is in the Son. But Brunner holds that "God can be other than the One revealed in Jesus Christ as Light and Life, namely the Hidden God, who as such operates not in the Words and its light, but in that which is not 'word' or 'knowledge', in darkness."<sup>71</sup> Statements like this and his general view that "revelation does not remove the mystery of God; on the

68. The following statements seem clear enough: "The slain and crucified Christ is none other than the Risen and Glorified One who in His second coming will complete His work. Through Him world history will receive its ultimate meaning, which through creation it contained in itself but which it lost through sin." *Eternal Hope*, p. 86. "Faith in Jesus Christ without the expectation of His Parousia is a voucher that is never redeemed, a promise that is not seriously meant. A Christian faith without expectation of the Parousia is like a ladder which leads nowhere but ends in the void." *Ibid.*, p. 138.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

70. The keenest analysis of Brunner's view of the resurrection and its significance is in *The Authority of the Old Testament* (London: 1947) by A. G. Herbert, pp. 117-122. Cf. also Carl Henry, *The Drift of Western Thought* (Grand Rapids: 1951) p. 121, n. 42. The chapter on the resurrection in *Eternal Hope* is no clearer than previous treatments in *The Mediator* and *Dog*. Vol. II.

71. *Dog*. Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 232 cf. also pp. 225, 6 and the critique of John Dillenberger, *God Hidden and Revealed* (Philadelphia: 1953), especially pp. 101-117. On Brunner's view of the Trinity cf. Claude Welch, *The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (The American title is *In This Name*) (London: 1953).

contrary, the revelation deepens the mystery of God," continue to arouse much controversy in the theological arena.<sup>72</sup>

Lastly, I want to make one observation that comes after struggling with Brunner and his theology rather intensively these past two years. Critics of Brunner, even those who make no pretensions of being "orthodox," generally come to a common conclusion: Brunner's theology is too subjective, lacking any consistent norm of faith. I would submit that perhaps just the opposite is the case. Speaking in terms of revelation, here is a case of extreme objectivity. If there is an overall weakness it is that revelation is confined too narrowly to one point, the Incarnation.<sup>73</sup> Those who have heard Brunner these past two years have heard him continuously "ring the changes" on the cross and only the cross. (In a sense this is good Pauline tradition—I Cor. 2:2). Thus limiting real, actual revelation to the Christ-event has been well called a "Christo-monistic" conception of revelation. "The consistent conclusion from this conception must be, then, that there is no revealing activity of God under the Old Covenant. . . . On the basis of this 'God-Himself' the Christomonistic conception of revelation cannot recognize any *other* revelation than the one in the incarnated

72. *Dog.* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

Related to this general view is the Kierkegaardian notion of "Christ incognito" which Brunner employs with only slight modification. Cf. G. C. Berkouwer *The Person Of Christ* (Grand Rapids: 1954) Chapter 13, "Christ Incognito?" Berkouwer, one of the leading theologians in the Netherlands whose projected 19 volumes of *Dogmatics* are being translated into English is rapidly becoming recognized in the U.S. as "among the best theological writers of our day." His "rave notices" from sources as divergent as E. T. Ramsdell of Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston and Nels Ferre of Vanderbilt to Carl Henry and D. M. Lloyd-Jones of London indicate his significance. In each of his 5 volumes translated thus far he has shown a magnificent grasp of not only Barth and Brunner but of all European theology.

73. An illustration of this method in the Old Testament, i.e., of selecting one central historical event which alone is truly revelation, all that comes before and after being *indirectly* revelation only to the extent that it is close to the center is G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts* (London: 1952). In this case it is the exodus event that is normative, all else in the Old Testament almost paling into insignificance. The God "who acts" also *speaks*, and to depreciate or ignore the speech or interpretation is just as dangerous and one-sided as to undercut the historical. Cf. the critique of this approach by P. R. Ackroyd of Cambridge University "Crisis and Evolution in the Old Testament," *The Evangelical Quarterly*, April, 1953, also Berkouwer, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids: 1955) p. 100.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 102, cf. also Wolfgang Schweitzer, *The Authority of the Bible* (London: 1951) pp. 148, 9. In dialectical theology "the history of God with men is compressed into this one point. . . . That there is here [in the Old Testament] a history of God with man, i.e., a succession of *different* acts of God upon men and through men, is in fact not taken seriously."

Word."<sup>74</sup> I think this quotation well expresses what I mean by saying that the criticism of "subjective" really misses the point.<sup>75</sup>

As I warned earlier, this has hardly been more than a bibliography; or to use a Brunnerian phrase "a pointer" in respect to the versatile and profoundly relevant and challenging theology of Emil Brunner. Even so this has been for me a soul-searching process which has involved not only much mental struggle but prayer and a constant return to the Holy Scriptures. Criticism has not been easy because of an admiration and love for the man Emil Brunner whose friendship I cherish. The "encounter in Japan" has almost taken a tragic turn which the world may not know, for Dr. Brunner, while en route home, suffered a stroke which paralyzed part of his body and leaves him today in a weakened condition. There is little doubt that this was but a result of his strenuous labors in Japan since it occurred before he even reached home. Japanese Christians and missionaries in general and I in particular can only say sincerely and gratefully, "We thank you, Emil Brunner, and we will never forget."

75. I must acknowledge my debt to my former college roommate and close friend, Eugene Heideman (who has an article elsewhere in this issue) who first suggested this notion of hyper-objectivity in Brunner's theology to me. He is now preparing a thesis on a comparison of the doctrine of revelation in H. Bavinck and Brunner at the University of Utrecht.

## COMMENTS BY BRUNNER

(The following are comments by Dr. Brunner on the above article)

I do not think that, as far as the report goes, I would wish any changes, perhaps apart from the one which strikes me as a little comical, where you speak of my resemblance with some American gentleman and add that I am more handsome.

You wish me to criticize and comment upon your critical estimate of my theology. This, I feel, is a legitimate request, and I shall try to do my best following the remarks as they come.

(P. 19 n. 24) You are right. The contact with the church's work in vocational evangelism really has thrilled me just as much as the contact with the Mukyokai, perhaps just because they are so much laymen's work.

(P. 22) You speak of my key-writings. I think that most people who are competent would place *The Mediator* and *Man in Revolt* in the first place.

(P. 22 n. 30) The exegesis of II Cor. 5:16 I do not hold any more and the criticisms of Bailey and that of Elias Andrews are implicitly accepted by me in the *Dogmatics* II.

(P. 26) My attitude towards biblical criticism has changed insofar as I do not any more accept radical criticism, for instance that of Bultmann. Neither am I any more supporting the Wellhausen hypothesis, at least not in its original form.

(P. 26 n. 50) The Genesis narrative of the creation and fall is mythological only in its *form*. You know that for me, both creation and fall, are fundamental Christian doctrines. The virgin birth I do not strictly reject, but I stress above all that it is not part of the *New Testament Gospel*. None of the apostles taught it and therefore it should never be made a Christian fundamental doctrine.

(P. 26 n. 51) The empty tomb is at any rate not explicitly part of the resurrection message which the apostles teach. I would not object to have someone call my theology a "refined version of Reformation theology." I always feel most close to Luther's theology, although not to Lutherans.

(P. 26 n. 47) Please do not quote this any more. The *Theology of Crisis* on the whole should not be quoted any more.

(P. 28 n. 58) Please note that I was never conscious of being strictly influenced by Martin Buber. I read his *I-Thou* many years after my *Man in Revolt*. Although when I came to know his writings, I felt very much at home in them. My eyes were opened by Ferdinand Ebner. Ebner as a matter of fact published his book one year before Buber. But Buber claims to have independently discovered the "I-Thou" concept.

(P. 30 n. 71) This distinction I learned from Martin Luther through the mediation of Theodosius Harnack's book on Luther's theology. I still think that this is the best which has been written so far.

(P. 31) Are you aware that the conception of *Christomonistic* is coined by me, meaning Karl Barth's doctrine of the Trinity? It has since been adopted by many.

(P. 32 n. 75) About objectivity. I do not find the passage where you speak about my concept of objectivity. I do not understand what you mean. A. Of course, it is wrong to interpret me so as to exclude revelation in the Old Testament. You find the very opposite view in *Revelation and Reason*, chapter 6, 7. B. What is baffling for most readers is this: they expect me to approve one of the traditional conceptions. They do not understand that I am trying to express a view of revelation which does not fit in any of the ready-made patterns. So if I am asked, do you believe this or this, I have to say no and yes. The no and the yes comes from the fact that my view is old and new at the same time. If you are baffled by my "Conception of History"—this is just one case where I differ from everybody, as far as I know. For instance, the last day, the day of Christ's coming, is just by being the last day not a day in our sense. I hope that you may find something useful in my remarks.



## THE CONFESSION OF THE FATHERS

EUGENE HEIDEMAN

In 1950, the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) adopted a new Church Order, after having lived for over 130 years under an order given to her by King William I after the fall of Napoleon. Especially since the days of Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper and J. Hoedemaker, the issue of the place and function of the confessions of the Church in the Church Order have occupied an important role in the discussion of the Church. The results of the discussions which have taken place since 1816, or better, since the Reformation, are to be seen in the new Church Order. Hence it is well for the Reformed Church in America (RCA) to stop from time to time to listen in order that she may hear what her Mother Church across the waters has learned since the days of Livingstone, Scholte and van Raalte. This article will concern itself with the relation of the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk to her written confessions. Because the subject is so large, it will be possible to indicate only a few of the points of her thought.

In order to present as accurately as possible the view of the NHK, the author will refrain as much as possible from personal opinion and criticism. It is not his intention or desire that all that has been done in the NHK should be repeated in the RCA, but only his desire that some of the following points be known and considered. Chief among the sources which have been used are *Kerkorde Der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1951; *Handelingen, Generale Synode*, 1948; Th. L. Haitjema, *Nederlands Hervormd Kerkrecht*; O. Noordmans, *Kerkelijke Denken voorwaarde voor Kerkorde*; A. A. van Ruler, *De Belijdende Kerk in de Nieuwe Kerkorde*, and "Plaats en Functie der Belijdenis" in *Visie en Vaart*, plus class notes taken at the University of Utrecht and informal conversation with ministers and other members of the NHK, with whom the author has spoken in the past year.

This article concerns itself, then, with the interpretation of Art. X, section 1 of the Church Order. "In dankbare gehoorzaamheid aan de Heilige Schrift als de bron der prediking en enige regel des geloofs doet de gehele Kerk, ook in haar ambtelijke vergaderingen, in gemeenschap met de belijdenis der vaderen en in het besef van haar verantwoordelijkheid voor het heden, zich strekkende naar de toekomst van Jezus Christus, belijdenis van de zelfopenbaring van de Drieenige God." (In thankful obedience to the Holy Scripture as the source of the preaching and only rule of faith, the whole church, also in her official gatherings, in fellowship with the confession of the fathers and in the realization of her responsibility to the



present, looking to the coming again of Jesus Christ, does confession of the self-revealing of the Triune God.) Of primary concern will be the meaning of the phrase, "in fellowship with the confession of the fathers."

## I

Before the article itself can be discussed, it is necessary to make a few remarks concerning the nature of the Church Order itself. The Church Order views the Church as apostolic; that is, the Church is placed in the world by God to witness to the world concerning God's promises and commands. Because of the nature of the Church, the confessions as such do not belong in the Church Order as one part of it. There is no special article for the confessions. Such an article would only serve to emphasize the confession as one element among many, or make it to be a special formula for testing Christendom, or else to make it a vague liturgical symbol. Instead, the Church Order is so written that every letter and article of it is filled with the spirit of the confession. The confession is the background to which the Church Order refers, for it is the background of the revelation of God in the history. It stands in relation to preaching, ruling, work of mercy, education, missions, fellowship, and order in daily life.

The confession of the Church lies in the correct speaking and acting of the Church. The confessional element is a ferment in the apostolic element. It is the order in the right speaking and acting in the Church. Thus, whereas, in the Dordrecht Church Order, the Church was turned within itself in order to keep itself pure, the new Order, because of the missionary situation of the Church in the present day, is turned outward toward the world. The confession in this new order thus is given not so much a place as a function to fulfill. The NHK has desired to maintain the confessions, not as law, but as the first principle of the Church Order.

In the confession, the Church first of all explains to the world the what, how, and why of her apostolic task. In it, she finds for herself a permanent reminder that all her work can only be understood out of the activity of God, and that it is no mere activistic program which she has. Finally, she has the unmistakable directions for all her work in its whole and in all its parts.

## II

Art. X says that all confession of the Church is from the Scripture via the confession of the fathers to the confession in the present. Thus all confessing begins with the Scripture. Confessing is an event, an encounter of the Church with Scripture. Church confession is a commentary on Scripture in the words and speech of her time. The Church can go to nothing behind Scripture—not to reason, intuition, or the history. God in his self-revelation is the speaking God himself (Calvin). Hence the reaction of the Church can be only thankful obedience, preaching and faith.

The living God comes to us in and through and out of his Word. He places the Church in the world with her preaching and faith, dogma and confession, life and works. We are that Church. That is the Church of the centuries. The Word takes its course through the peoples of the earth. God goes his way through the centuries.

The Church lives in the confession of the fathers which has come down to her through the centuries, the confession which the fathers have drawn out of the Scripture. It lives according to the religion of that confession, according to the life of the Spirit in the heart of the Church. Some have asked if it is possible to "live in a confession." This is possible if one takes the word 'confession' not in a formal, but in a material sense; 'the confession'—that is, above all else the content of the confession—is her religion as work of the Spirit. One can live in that. In fact, that is most important, that men live in the confession with heart and hand and mind.

As clarification of the above considerations in regard to Art. X, five things can be said:

1. The first has to do with the form and content of the confession. The authority of the confession rests in its content. As the Scripture has her authority in her content, so does the confession have its authority in its content, in the religion of the confession. The measure of authority is not the stature of the assembly which has accepted the confession, but rather its content as interpretation of Scripture. The authority of the confession is spiritual, and in its character as true interpretation of Scripture it has authority to which no Church can add or take away. Obligation to the confession can mean nothing other than obligation to Scripture.

Living in the confession means that the confession cannot be maintained as only a formal authority. It can and must also be retained as formal authority, for the Church is human as well as spiritual. Men are sinners, although in the Church they are justified sinners. As Reformed, we know that we are always below the measure of the religion of our confessions. For this reason, especially where the necessity of holding to the confession is most strictly and sternly emphasized, a broad measure of tolerance is required around the confession because the religion of the confession goes so far above us. No one has ever succeeded in believing and living his entire confession. Just because the confession penetrates so deeply into human life, there lies around her a field of tolerance in order that it may have room to wrestle with the sin of man. Thus the NHC holds that her confessions are more than a law or statute. Besides the dimensions of the Scripture and the confession of the fathers, there is always the third dimension, the work of the Spirit in the true religion. The third dimension is the working of God through Word and Spirit in the confession of the Church. Without this the confession becomes only formal. The more

one lives in the content of the confession, the less one needs the formal authority. The confession is an instrument of the power and rule of the Spirit.

The confession has to do in content with the One God and the knowledge and fear of him. As such it is not only the confession of the Church, but is also addressed to men inside and outside the Church. It stands over against man and points out his sins. Thus the maintaining of a confession becomes a struggle in which the Spirit wrestles with the sin of man. This is the position in which the NHK finds herself today, a Church in unrest over and struggle with her confessions.

2. The second thing to be said has to do with the place and function of the written confession. The Church Order says (Art. X, section 2) that the confession of the fathers is contained in the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed as well as in the Heidelberg Catechism (the Catechism of Geneva for the Walloon congregations), the Belgic Confession with the Canons of Dort. Thus three are the ecumenical symbols of the Church whereas the other three are the specifically Reformed confessions.

Here one meets the ecumenical problem of the Church with full force. The problem is met not only in connection with the first three, but even more in connection with the last three. Confessions, as confession of the Truth, are by their very nature confessions for the whole Church. The confession cannot represent one area of Truth alongside other areas, but rather must be taken seriously as *the* Truth. When one confesses, he confesses not only for himself, but for the whole Church. Church confessions speak for and to the one Catholic Church. This cannot be understood juridically, but only spiritually. Confession must be in the name of the whole Church. It cannot be for only part of the Church. It must take upon itself the responsibility of the expression of the voice of the *Una Sancta Catholica*. Yet it is always only a part of the Church that stands behind a confession. Thus a Church with a confession cannot avoid the ecumenical problem.

Yet it is just at this point that the Church is seen to be most seriously split. Nowhere is the split seen so clearly as in the doctrine. Many today, in the belief that men as Christians must work and live together have come to believe that doctrine is only secondary. There is a certain amount of truth in that position, as is evidenced by the stand of the Churches in regard to accepting the baptism when administered by other Churches. Yet as one thinks of Christ himself, who is the Truth, one must accept the fact that there is more in working together than fellowship. The Truth is not something that lies between us, but comes from above, from Christ himself, the Truth. It is a confession *of him*. Since preaching is the heart of

an apostolic Church, one must say that the essence of the Church is her speaking. If this is true, one cannot easily pass over the confession. The form of salvation, and thus the form in which we possess the salvation, must be sought in the conscience and consciousness.

In her confessions, then, the NHK considers herself to be the One Holy Catholic Church in The Netherlands, Reformed according to the Word of God, in fellowship with the confession of the fathers. Yet it is also forced to recognize the brokenness of its confession by the fact of the presence of other Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

3. There is a fundamental distinction made in Art. X between the Scripture on the one side and the confession of the fathers on the other side. This brings difficulties. If one emphasizes Scripture, one stands in danger of minimizing the place of the confession; if one emphasizes the confession of the fathers, one tends to equate it with the Scripture. This difficulty cannot be overcome in a Presbyterian Church Order. In a Roman Catholic Order, the difficulty is solved by the place of the pope or bishop. But the Presbyterian order cannot accept this theological solution. In the Presbyterian order, both the living Word of God and the Word-hearing man in the Spirit receive their full place. But when one takes both the Word and the Word-hearing man seriously, one has complications. The confession receives a full and fixed place, but the Bible stands over against the confession and must also be given its full and unique position.

4. A further complication comes when one speaks of the responsibility of the confessing Church in the present. In Art. X, section 3, it is said that the Church confesses 'ever anew' in her preaching, witnessing, special denominational messages to be read from the pulpits, catechism, and written confessions, to Jesus Christ as Head of the Church and Lord of the world.

Here the fact that the Church is apostolic stands firmly before us. The confessing, apostolic Church lives in the realization of her responsibility in the present. The relative historical situation in which the Church is placed is not an unfortunate accident, but the place where the Church is to work. The Church's place is on earth in the midst of sin, not in heaven. It is on earth that she is to confess her Head. Preaching is not the speaking of eternal truth, but the proclamation of the living Word of God.

The confession of the fathers is not to be kept in a safe or museum and guarded by the Church. It is not the duty of the Church to protect and keep the Truth, but to proclaim it. The confession must be proclaimed as widely as possible. It is of the essence of a confession that it longs for publicity. Practical problems concerning whether the world or the people of the Church are ready for the Truth are not to be considered. The confessions must be given full publicity. If one keeps his confession in hiding,

or says that he believes it but does not preach it, the confession is reduced to theory. The 'event' of the confession happens in the publicity. The 'not-event' is against the confession—its betrayal. When one does not give the confession the publicity it desires, he signifies that he has surrendered the position of the confession to the enemy.

The Church Order leaves open a place for new confession, in the sense of a new Belgic confession, but such new confession is not required by the Church Order. Some groups and members inside the Church, and even the General Synod have made attempts at such formulas in recent years. At present, however, such a new confession does not seem to be on the horizon, for the historical situation is not ripe. In the words of Barth, confessions always have a 'battle-origin.' It has a pre-history of discussion. The previous unity has been so lost in discussion that the unity itself has been darkened and must be re-discovered. The new decision must, in newer expression of the unity of the faith, express clearly in distinction to the opponent's the judgment of Scripture. Behind the confession stands not an academic decision, but a decision in the life of the Church. It says 'no' to opposing doctrine. Without that 'no' the 'yes' would not be a 'yes.' Unless one dares and must say *anathema sit* the time is not ripe for a new confession.

New confessions are not written to solve a theological problem. Dogma says much more what the Gospel message is not, than what it is. It does not solve problems; heresy does that. Dogma shows the mystery of the message. Before Chalcedon, it was Arius who tried to rationalize the Christian message. Before Dort, it was the Remonstrants who attempted to rationalize the way in which man turns to God; Dort declared the mystery of God's grace. Thus the reproach of 'intellectualism' against the creeds is pure misunderstanding; it is the creeds that protect the mystery of God's grace; heresy by its theological statements tries to avoid the mystery. Confessions are born, not made. Confessions do not set forth ideals; they touch things and culture and have political significance. Confessions do not speak ideals, but are given to the Church in its continual emergency situation.

5. There is no signing of the formula for the written confession. It is believed by the NHK that such a signing is practically useless. In the 18th century such a signing was required, but confessions were so lowly regarded and unknown that one could not even buy a copy of the Canons of Dort. The history of the 19th century did not change the opinion of the Church. But the NHK has a greater objection in that the confession is not so much a formal authority, as that it has authority in its content, the religion of the confession. The question is whether one lives with the Church in this religion and so is in correct speaking and acting. One lives in the fathers' confession, which has been drawn out of Scripture (X:3).

There is a fellowship through the centuries. The history is not empty, but filled with the fellowship of the saints. We stand in love in the past. The present is rooted—in the manner of the Spirit—in the past.

This is not to say that the Church with confession of the fathers does not need Scripture. A Church with only confession, but not Scripture, is no Church, but is a dying and dead body. Scripture is *the* source of her preaching. A confession is not an object, but the expression of faith. We believe not in the confession but in God. Scripture is the rule, and confession is the expression. But neither do we live only out of Scripture. A confession is not an object, but the expression of faith. We believe not in the confession but in God. Scripture is the rule, and confession is the expression. But neither do we live only out of Scripture. A confession is also a living reality. The NHK is not new, but stands in the midst of the continuity of the Spirit in the history. It is Reformed Christianity. It is not possible to be neutral in the event of confession once the confession has been formulated. There can never be a leaving behind of confession, not even in China or Japan.

But then comes the question, is the historical confession the confession of now? Is the religion of the confession of the fathers the religion of today? The NHK, without hesitation, says 'yes.' It is Christian and Reformed, not Mohammedan, Buddhist, nor even Lutheran, Anglican or Roman Catholic. In her ecumenical work there is only one possibility for her: To work in a deep fellowship in the confession of the fathers. The Church is ecumenical in time as well as in space.

The stand of the NHK is clearly shown at this point by her choice of the word fellowship (*gemeenschap*). Some suggested *overeenstemming* (at-one-voice-with) but this was rejected as being too weak. It involved too much the idea of intellectual assent, whereas what was desired was a word showing that the confession of the fathers was to be lived with the whole understanding, and heart, and hands, and mouth. The Church Order refers to the confessions as fundamental, not to something behind the confessions. There must be no mental reservations or agreement-with-the-basic-articles idea in regard to the confession. One is under the discipline of the whole confession and Church Order. Confession is not only for doctrinal discipline (for that too!) but for the whole activity of the Church.

### III

In summary then, it can be said that the NHK has not solved the problem of her relation to the confessions, but rather that in every one of the above five points there is an unsolved and unsolvable problem. Yet in every case the problem comes just because the confessions are taken so seriously by the Church that in the very solution of the problems concerned the confessions themselves could no longer be taken seriously. There is no

simple logical solution to the problems. The solution can only come when the Church completely lives in the religion of the confession. The confession is an event, never a conclusion.

The leaders of the NHK delight in the phrase, "A Confession is not only a crutch on which to lean, but a staff by which to go and a hymn of praise to be sung." In the words of one of the greatest theologians of all time, "His faith goes over into wonder, his knowledge ends in devotion, and his confessions runs out in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving. Of this nature is the knowledge of God. . . It is not knowledge alone, and much less a comprehension, but it is better and more glorious, it is a knowledge which is life, eternal life, John 17:3" (Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*. 1906, Vol. I, pp. 669f.)



## A TRIBUTE TO ALBERTUS PIETERS

"A prince has fallen in Israel." That ancient word has received fresh fulfillment in the passing of Albertus Pieters, December 24, 1955. A leader among his fellows, Dr. Pieters was by common consent one of the most illustrious sons of the Reformed Church in America.

Albertus Pieters, so named after the founder of the colony at Holland, Michigan, was born in the year 1869 to the Rev. and Mrs. Roelof Pieters in Alto, Wisconsin. The year following the family moved to Holland, Michigan, where the father had accepted a call to succeed the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte at the First Reformed Church. Dr. Pieters received all of his formal education in the schools of Holland graduating from Hope College in 1887 with three classmates who were also to spend their lives in missionary service. Emma Kollen, from Overisel, was to become Mrs. Pieters, Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer was to go to Arabia and Dr. H. V. S. Peake was to go to Japan. After his graduation from Western Seminary in 1891, where he was a student of Dr. Nicholas M. Steffens and Dr. John W. Beardslee, Dr. Pieters and his bride sailed for Japan having been commissioned missionaries by the Reformed Church in America.

For thirty-two years Dr. and Mrs. Pieters proclaimed the Christian evangel by word and deed in Japan. The most notable facet of his service there was the introduction of newspaper evangelism. This proved to be a highly effective mode of setting Christianity before large numbers of persons and his labors bore rich fruit. Many in "the land of the rising sun" have arisen to call him blessed because of the impact which Providence enabled Dr. Pieters to make in their lives. Some of those persons were farmers whose hearts were changed by reading materials which came from his hand. Others were converted in private conference or in study with him. Men in business and in professions were won for Christ. A number of his books were translated into the Japanese language and are still in print. The influence of Dr. and Mrs. Pieters is perhaps best attested, however, by the naming of the great "New Life" building in Fukuoka after him. Because it was an outgrowth of his work, and because those years of labor were a lasting inspiration to converts, missionary colleagues and successors, that headquarters of Christian outreach was named "The Albertus Pieters Evangelistic Center." Thus the monument to his ministry is in that land of his adoption where he spent the greater part of his active service.

3 The evangelistic building which bears his name in a distant land is not the only memorial to his name, however. Another, it can be said, is the students who sat at his feet in America. When Dr. and Mrs. Pieters

and their family found it necessary to leave Japan to resume residence in this country many must have wondered at that strange and apparently inexplicable providence. Their ministry there was becoming more fruitful with the years. Why then should they have to relinquish that work for other duties elsewhere? That question was a good one at the time, but those who subsequently sat at Dr. Pieters' feet during their years of theological training see the hand of God in that course of events. The Lord of the Church had already used him and Mrs. Pieters for thirty-two years in the evangelization of a non-Christian people. Now he would bring them back to this country that Dr. Pieters' gifts and experience might be used in the training of other ministers and missionaries who would carry on the work after his service here was complete.

Those gifts and that experience were used in large measure in the years that Dr. Pieters taught at the college and seminary. When, within the past month, a denominational leader referred to Dr. Pieters as his greatest teacher, he might have been speaking for many of us. For our professor, as we delight to call him, had that rare combination of gifts that could make him appear to his students to be without a peer in his profession. He was not infallible—what man is?—but many felt that his judgment on Biblical and theological themes was about as close to that sublime norm as it is possible to attain in this life. And after he had stated his position on a problem with his customary logic he had a concluding illustration so appropos that many felt that the last word had been said—at least for a long time.

Allusion has already been made to Dr. Pieters' "rare combination of gifts." There were many that impressed his students. One was his *thoroughness*. He would explore a problem—he delighted in them—from all angles, clearing away difficulties, uncovering assumptions, pointing out fallacies in reasoning—and at this he was a master. When his conclusion was reached it was usually the students' conclusion also. Dr. Pieters was one man with whom students found it very difficult to disagree in Biblical studies. But that was not because he refused to entertain discussion. Indeed not! He welcomed it and reveled in wholesome argumentation. But his students had learned, some of us almost painfully, that to engage him in debate in class, or out of class, might best receive second consideration.

Lest that suggest, however, any distance between Dr. Pieters and his students we hasten to add that a second characteristic was his affection for all of them. That is why he was so ready to talk about personal, as well as about Biblical, problems, and that is also why he was so very human. There was never anything stuffy or artificial about him.

His gift of industry is another that marked the man. When he asked students to work they knew that he was setting a worthy example. Indeed,

few worked or could work as he did. After his retirement from the seminary, when he was called upon in emergencies to assist in both the college and the seminary, he remarked to a young colleague with joyful satisfaction that he could still stay at his desk until midnight or after and feel fresh and ready for his classes in the morning. His many and excellent writings, known in Christian circles far and near, and the large volume of correspondence which he carried on with friends and former students are witnesses to his industry which continued to the very end of his sojourn with us. In his last days he was in correspondence with a publishing house concerning the translation and publication of a foreign work for which, in spite of failing eyesight, he had volunteered his services as translator.

Lastly, although much more could be said, to speak compendiously, Dr. Pieters had a peculiar and undefinable teaching gift. A part of it was his enthusiasm for the acquisition of knowledge and imparting it to others. His range of interest must also be considered here. His humor with which his lectures and class discussions were spiced helped stimulate interest and make every class session a delight. His courage in grappling with difficulties, and his insistence that students learn thoroughly the fundamentals in a course of study are all a part of his greatness as a teacher. To single out this last characteristic, many of us can still see him moving about the classroom with the pointer in his hand and hear him say, when a student had forgotten some detail, "Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon." Then he might say, "Review some more, gentlemen, for *repetitio est mater studiorum*." And while he would frequently cite that Latin aphorism his students might well recall the medieval phrase used in ecclesiastical environs to express authoritative statement: *Magister dixit*—for the teacher had spoken.

His many friends and students salute his passing to his heavenly home. We pay him tribute and thank his God, who is also our God, for the life and service of Albertus Pieters, scholar and friend, defender of the faith, minister of the Word of God.

#### WRITINGS OF ALBERTUS PIETERS

The following is a list of the books and pamphlets of Dr. Pieters. A listing of his articles appearing in the *Church Herald* and in other church papers may be found in the indexes of the *Church Herald* and in the *Western Seminary Bulletin*, December, 1948, p. 15.

##### BIBLICAL STUDIES

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*Jonah and the Whale, and Dr. M. R. De Haan*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930. Pp. 30.

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*Notes on Old Testament History.* Holland: Western Theological Seminary (mimeographed), 1937. Pp. 227.  
*The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1937. Pp. 383. Second Edition, Grand Rapids: Church Press, 1946.  
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*Notes on Genesis.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943. Pp. 196.  
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*The Seed of Abraham.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950. Pp. 161.  
*Notes on Old Testament History, Exodus to Nehemiah.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950. Pp. 253.  
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#### HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

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*Correspondence between the Classis of East Sioux, Reformed Church in America, and the Reverend Albertus Pieters, D.D., with Regard to the Teaching of the Catechism Entitled, "The Christian Comfort," upon the Doctrines of the Fourth Commandment and the Lord's Day.* Holland: The Author, (mimeographed) 1945. Pp. 15.

#### CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS AND MISSIONS

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*Missionary Problems in Japan.* New York: Board of Publication, R. C. A., 1912. Pp. 188.  
*Seven Years of Newspaper Evangelism in Japan.* Tokyo: Kyobunkwan Publishing House, 1919. Pp. 47.  
*Kirisuto Kyo Mondo (A Christian Catechism).* Tokyo: Kyobunkwan Publishing House, 1920.  
*Kirisuto Den Hyaku Wa (A Hundred Talks on the Life of Christ).* Tokyo: Kyobunkwan Publishing House, 1923. Pp. 462.  
*Lectures on the Comparative Study of Non-Christian Religions, with Special Reference to Those Prevailing in the Mission Fields of the Reformed Church in America.* Holland: Western Theological Seminary (mimeographed), 1934. Pp. 103.

## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Professor Lester J. Kuiper initiated the special faculty series of lectures that are a feature of this dedicatory year and which may become a tradition on Western's campus. On Oct. 6, Professor Kuiper presented "The Repentance of Job," giving us the insight that Job retracted from the position of trying to force God into his narrow dogma of retributive theology; his welfare and fellowship were not dependent on externalities, God was his friend and Saviour based on grace (Pauline) and not on merit.

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The following week, Oct. 13 and 14, Dr. G. Ernest Wright, McCormick Theological Seminary, was present on our campus. He stimulated our thinking on the general subject "Biblical Theology and the Faith of the Church," discussed in the following topics: "The Identity of God," "The Rule of God," and "The Knowledge of God."

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Continuing in the Old Testament vein was the faculty lecture delivered by Dean George H. Mennenga, Nov. 3, entitled "The Conflict of Faith in Habakkuk." Dr. Mennenga spoke of the intellectual and moral problem encountered in the crisis as presented to Habakkuk which was resolved in the timeless truth "The just shall live by faith," even though he earnestly prayed for a reenactment of God's operation and deliverance.

On Dec. 8, President John R. Mulder addressed the student body and guests on the subject "The Glory of Preaching." We were reminded that for a limited time we are ambassadors of Christ's glory, bringing a Christ-centered biblical message, delivered with positive distinctiveness and endowed with a formal appointment which is supplemented by our consecration to Christ.

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The weekly meetings of the Adelpic Society have shown careful planning by Vice-President Levi Akker. The first meeting of the school year on September 20 featured a picnic supper at Camp Geneva and an inspirational address by Professor Mennenga. Programs during October included: an American Bible Society film on the origin of the Bible; Mr. Stephen Roberts from the local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous; an address by Mr. Donald Thomas from the First National Bank of Holland on the problems of church finance; and the Rev. Raymond Weiss, who spoke about his work in Christian Endeavor. On November 1 the Rev. John Nieuwsma of Holland told us of some of his practical experiences in the ministry; and the following week Mr. Dick Winter spoke and showed pictures concerning the influence of the Temple Time radio broadcast in the islands of the Caribbean Sea. Dr. John Piet, our own guest professor of Mis-

sions, spoke to us on the 15th. He took as his topic, "In the Shadow of St. Paul," and showed us slides which he had taken as he traveled through the Holy Land and Asia Minor. The faculty and students of Calvin Seminary were our guests at this meeting. The next week in connection with our Mission Drive Dr. Piet showed pictures on his Bible Correspondence program in India. And on December 6, the first meeting of the second quarter, Ray Teusink and Roy Kats of the middler and senior classes respectively showed us slides of their work last summer among the Indians in Winnebago, Nebraska.

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Mrs. Edward Tanis has completed a series of eight lectures on "The Mistress of the Manse" for the Adelpia Society. This was the first study course of the year and will be followed by a course of "Church Doctrine" under the leadership of the Rev. A. Rynbrandt. On Oct. 24, the society was entertained by the wives of the faculty members. Mrs. John H. Piet presented colored slides and spoke concerning missionary work in India. The annual Seminary Christmas party sponsored by the Adelpia was held Dec. 12. Henry Van Dyke's story "The Other Wise Man" was presented in a film with Mrs. Leonard De Beer as narrator and musical interludes sung by the Adelpia sextette.

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The Christian Action Group on our campus is entering into the second year of activity. Thus far the

meetings have been marked with increased attendance and interest as we have discussed relevant problems which a Christian must face in the social order. The initial meeting "Why and How the Christian Should be Concerned with the Social Order" prepared the way for the year's activity. This discussion was led by Sylvester Moths and Lloyd Arnoldink. The November meeting, under the direction of Julius O. Brandt, was engaged with the problem "How Can the Christian Minister Most Effectively Penetrate the Community." At the December meeting Neal J. Mol directed our attention on the issue "Christ and the Lodge." Four monthly meetings are scheduled after the first of the year.

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The Christian Action Commission of General Synod will meet on our campus during the coming month, February, 1956. Professor Lester J. Kuypers is a member of that commission.

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On November 3-5, fourteen members of our student body were guests at the Augustana Theological Seminary at Rock Island, Illinois, for the annual Fall Conference of the Chicago Midwest Region of The Inter-Seminary Movement. The theme of the conference was entitled, "Missions: Imperative or Optional?" This conference was noted for the stimulating and inspirational messages, the discussion groups and the fellowship we enjoyed with students from more than twenty seminaries from seven states in the Midwest area.

As the title "Goyim" (nations—Isaiah 52:10) Missionary Fellowship implies, the organization at Western Seminary is a group of students and their wives interested in learning about and furthering the cause of world missions. Its methods are various, employing prayer meetings, correspondence with missionaries, and special projects along with meetings the first Friday of each month. So far this year, Goyim has spread its interests between missions home and abroad. On Oct. 7, Rod Jackson and Chuck Johnson presented slides on Michigan migrant work at Grand Junction, where they worked last summer. On Nov. 4, we viewed the film, "Song of the Shining Mountain," produced by the National Council of Churches, portraying present problems of work with American Indians. On Dec. 2, Dr. Wells Thoms presented a thought provoking address to the group entitled "Why Cast Our Pearls Before Moslems," designed to answer the question, "Why RCA missions in Arabia?"

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Western Seminary held its first Missions Day on Nov. 22, under the sponsorship of the Goyim Missionary Fellowship. Taking as their slogan the Bible verse "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," both students and faculty combined efforts on behalf of the correspondence course work of RCA missionary to South India, Dr. John Piet. The results of the mission drive itself were remarka-

ble, in that the seminary pledged over \$2200.00, more than double the goal of \$1000.00 set by the Fellowship, sponsor of the drive. With nearly all pledges in, the total pledge stands at present at \$2213.00, of which forty per cent has been collected thus far. The Rev. Harold Leestma spoke at a special seminary breakfast, which began "Operation: Missions." Featured during the day was the new RCA film on India, "A Century With Christ in Arcot." The Rev. H. Leestma also presided at the drive itself, at which Dr. Piet, visiting professor at the Seminary this year, presented slides of his work in India.

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The Board of Education donated all the copies of "THE HYMN BOOK" for the chapel. During the last worship service of the year on Friday, December 16, a dedication service was held to inaugurate the use of these new hymnals. All of us deeply appreciate this gift which will be of much benefit for our worship.

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With the second quarter of school work well under way, we began our Christmas recess on Friday noon, December 16. With only a few exceptions, we spent the Christmas season with our families. We pray for God's blessings for all the Seminary family as we commemorate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and as we enter the activity of the New Year.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Book That is Alive*, by John Paterson, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954. Pp. x-196. \$3.50.

The subtitle, *Studies in Old Testament Life and Thought as Set Forth by the Hebrew Sages*, indicates that this book is chiefly concerned with the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. Two previous works of our author have dealt with the prophets, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets*, and with the Psalms, *The Praises of Israel*. The author rightly informs us that wise-men or wisdom schools were common place in Egypt and in lands of the Near East. Further riddles and sayings had currency in Israel even before the times of Solomon (p. 45), yet it would seem that the "wisdom school" was formally inaugurated by Solomon and that one need not doubt, as our author does (p. 46), that many of Solomon's proverbs have been preserved and collected in the Book of Proverbs.

The wise-men of Israel had chief concern with life in the practical spheres—the market place, the court of the king, the home, etc. The prophet's judgment of God in history or even the narration of history for a didactic purpose did not enage this school of thought. God was present in their deliberations, to be sure. However, the majestic overwhelming presence of the Lord high and lifted up in Isaiah or the hand of the Lord falling upon Ezekiel was not the setting of such writings as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes nor of apocryphal literature such as the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus. One finds an interesting survey of the various areas of life and thought that occupied the study of those in the Solomonic train (pp. 54-81).

The problem of human suffering, especially the suffering of the righteous, engaged the minds of these wise-men of ancient Israel. This comes to clear ex-

pression in Job. Paterson devotes a good part of his book (pp. 82-128) to an understanding of the struggle between Israel's formal faith in the justice of God that should requite each according to his just deserts and the facts of life and history that belied that faith. Our author has clearly sensed the main lines of argument that in the end convinced no one and surely did not solve the problem.

All students of Job have wondered why the problem does not rest itself in Job's well-known utterance, "For I know that my Redeemer lives and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then without my flesh I shall see God" (19:25, 26, RSV). Paterson believes that it was psychologically imperative to relieve the emotional strain that the victorious faith in the resurrection should be expressed. Perhaps so. However, the debate carries on, although less intense, to show that the author has another purpose—other than finding a solution for the problem in a vindication by God in the future life.

What is that purpose? Our author has rightly found it in, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee" (42:5). Here is the vision of God where vexing questions vex no more, and where Pascal's word is appropriate, "The heart has reasons that the reason does not know" (p.126).

Paterson fails to discuss Job's confession "repent in dust and ashes" (42:6). That, as it seems to me, is Job's belated admission that he was utterly in error to expect God's answer in the context of the well-established Old Testament teaching that God blesses the righteous and afflicts the wicked. The answer is in the God-man encounter that sees God as Savior and Friend. Reason however well infused with good theology was not the soil out of which the answer would grow, as Job had hoped. To be

released from this rationalistic approach was Job's unrecognized need. This his repentance makes clear.

Additional chapters on man's relationship to God give interesting material which is integrated with the New Testament and modern experience.

—LESTER J. KUYPER.

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*The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement*, By Thomas J. Crawford, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954. Pp. X-538. \$4.00. (Photolithoprinted, a Reprint).

*The Doctrine of Justification, An Outline of Its History in the Church and of Its Exposition from Scripture*, by James Buchanan, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955. Pp. X-514. \$4.95. (Reprinted from the 1867 printing by T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh).

These volumes are of uniform size and binding. A good quality of paper is employed and the type is clear. The work on justification is printed in larger and somewhat clearer type than that on the atonement. Both authors present the conservative or Reformed view of their respective subjects. Both rely entirely upon Scripture as the unquestioned authority in matters of faith. They write in a language and style traditional for their period. While an occasional expression seems archaic and the style throughout is definitely that of a century past, the thought is made clear in the language employed. Both authors were professors of divinity, Crawford at the University and Buchanan at the New College, Edinburgh. Each possessed a high reputation as a preacher.

It is the quality of clarity which is so much lacking in many contemporary productions especially in the specialized fields. One must be oriented before he can understand. He must learn the jargon of the field before he can communicate. While there may be some justifi-

cation for this situation in the physical sciences, though one wonders whether it needs to be carried so far as it is ordinarily, there can be no excuse for it at all in the realm of the Christian faith. Our Teacher spoke the profoundest truth in language so simple that the common people heard him gladly. Not the depth of one's thought, but lack of precision is responsible for a form of writing that mystifies. Perhaps an author uses jargon in order to control the reader. He is not presenting free thought to the free judgment of those who read, but a controlled thought in a controlled setting. The jargon explains everything. Only the "ins" understand. They are sure that what they are reading is correct because it is in the approved language. Criticism from others can be dismissed as unenlightened. Author and reader are relieved of the duty of critical judgment. The party spirit comes to its consummation in such specialized writing. Healthful and helpful discussion is impossible on these grounds. In contrast neither Crawford nor Buchanan hide behind language.

Crawford's work on the Atonement enjoyed three editions in rapid succession. This reprint is apparently of the second and somewhat enlarged edition. The first edition appeared four years after the work on the same subject by A. A. Hodge was published in America by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. While Crawford does refer to works of Dr. Charles Hodge, he does not appear to have made use of the volume by his son.

Crawford uses the inductive method which he defends with skill. He assumes that Jesus is the Son of God. While he holds to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures he insists that his argument needs to assume no more than the authority of the Scriptures in those matters which they are designed to teach (p. 2).

The book is divided into four parts. The first is by far the largest. Passages from the New Testament which bear on the subject of the atonement are organized into thirteen groups with further

sub-divisions making a total of twenty-four groups of texts. The sheer weight of the texts coupled with a lucid treatment of their bearing on the doctrine of the atonement should lift the beam in favor of the orthodox view. The results of this inductive research are summarized under twelve heads in the last two chapters.

Part II presents confirmatory evidence from the Old Testament. Here Crawford treats the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ; the Levitical sacrifices as divine institutions possessing a peculiar character under which he treats the contrary views of Bahr, Hofmann, Keil, and Young; and the patriarchal sacrifices.

Part III treats thirteen theories concerning the sufferings of Christ which have been proposed as substitutes for the Catholic doctrine of the atonement. The forms of a number of these theories have changed somewhat but the ideas remain basically the same and so do the objections. The material is thus still valuable, though a new work written with the same faith and scholarship in our day would be more immediately helpful. The last chapter presents four general remarks on the theories reviewed. It is admitted that almost all the theories contain a portion of truth. Moreover, that part of truth which they do contain has often been neglected by the defenders of the Catholic doctrine. However, no truth which they contain is inconsistent with such doctrine. In fact, apart from the Catholic doctrine, such truth cannot be maintained on reasonable or Scriptural grounds.

Part IV treats five objections to the Scriptural or Catholic doctrine of the atonement. They are: the alleged silence of Christ respecting the Atonement, that it is unnecessary, that it derogates from the perfections of God, that it is incredible because mysterious, and that it is injurious in its practical tendency.

An appendix with twelve notes on various subjects and covering thirty-eight pages is helpful to the serious student.

It is obvious that the method of treating the subject chosen by Dr. Crawford does not provide for a wide positive exposition. One is pleasantly surprised, therefore, to discover that most of what was said by A. A. Hodge is said in one way or another by Crawford. Hodge states the doctrine and then must defend it from Scripture against its opponents. Crawford seeks for the doctrine in Scripture and on the basis of what he finds defends it against its opponents. The inductive and deductive methods are not so far apart as one might imagine. Yet it is precisely Part I where the inductive method is employed that this reviewer found the most valuable.

Buchanan's work on Justification is rich and edifying. Roger Nicole of Gordon Divinity School has added a preface to that of the original published in 1867. Nicole gives a number of interesting historical facts concerning the author and a list of his chief publications. He calls attention to what is a patent fact that Dr. Buchanan had a "profound acquaintance with the history of the doctrine and a masterful grasp of its Scriptural foundations, as well as of its position in the system of Christian truth."

In an excellent introduction the author justifies treatment of a doctrine considered by many as one of the "commonplaces" of Theology settled during the Reformation. Theology has not exhausted the study of God's Word no more than human Science has exhausted the study of the volume of Nature. "The Gospel is older than Luther; but, to every succeeding generation, it is still new,—good news from God,—as fresh now as when it first sprang from the fountain of inspiration" (p. 2). He then shows from contemporary sources that many did not know the commonplace Reformation doctrine. He felt that the doctrine of justification by grace through faith was the "only sovereign and effectual antidote to each of the two great tendencies of the age," Rationalism and Ritualism, (p. 9), for it rouses the conscience of the Rationalist

out of its false security, and relieves the conscience of the Ritualist from his slavish anxieties and fears (p. 5).

The work is divided into two parts. Part I treats the history of the doctrine while Part II is concerned with its exposition. History, naturally, involves exposition and one has a rather clear view of what Buchanan believes concerning justification long before he comes to the second part. The subjects of the seven chapters in Part I indicate the wide area covered. He treats the history of the doctrine in the: I. Old Testament; II. Apostolic Age; III. Fathers and Scholastic Divines; IV. Reformation; V. Romish Church after the Reformation; VI. Controversies among Protestants; and VII in the Church of England.

In Lecture Five he points up the ease with which the Roman Church changed its argument against the Reformers. At the first it was urged that the Reformers taught a new doctrine not found in the Fathers and therefore not worthy of consideration. After the wide acceptance of the position of the Reformers it was urged that they taught nothing different from what was in the official dogmas of the church. Buchanan makes clear, however, that Rome taught nothing like the Reformation doctrine for if it is by works then it is no more of grace. The Diet of Ratisbon found many of the Pope's agents guilty of "sophisms and juggling tricks" (Melancthon) and that experience points up a danger present still. Concessions are made in language and differences are minimized until it seems that all can be brethren, but the truth as such is not acknowledged. "It has been justly said that, in controversies of Faith, the difference between antagonistic systems is often reduced to a line sharp as a razor's edge, yet on one side of that line there is God's truth, and on the other a departure from it" (p. 136). To this day Rome thinks of justification as something of which one cannot be certain in this life and as being the consequence of attained righteousness.

Having discussed in Lecture VI many variations among Protestants from the

view held by all the Reformers, the author justifies his course by a number of considerations of which his last is by far the most important. He would exclude the opposite errors of Legalism and Antinomianism by "affirming the equal necessity, and the inseparable connection, of the work of Christ *for* us, and the work of His Spirit *in* us, for our actual salvation. All the other false views studied make clear that the question of Justification may then be "reduced to *two* simple alternatives—since our pardon and acceptance must depend either on the free grace of God, or the free-will of man,—and rest either on the imputed righteousness of Christ, or on an inherent righteousness of our own" (p. 191).

In Lecture VII Buchanan describes the influences which led the Church of England so far from the view of declarative, to that of an infused, righteousness. He indicates that two generations, or about seventy years, was enough to bring about a complete change in the prevailing system of Theology. In 1560 the Church of England was Calvinistic and thoroughly Protestant. In 1630 it was Arminian and only faintly Protestant. A new school reigned in 1700 and by 1770 the Church was wrapped in spiritual slumber. By 1840 Oxford had its two rival schools, the one tending toward Romanism and represented by the "Tracts of the Times," and the other tintured with Rationalism and expressing itself in the "Essays and Reviews." It is of course these two tendencies which he seeks particularly to combat.

In Part II Dr. Buchanan expounds the doctrine of justification in thirty-four propositions. Here one sees how rich the doctrine really is and how impossible it is to separate it from the rest of the teachings of the Reformers. For instance, the nature of the atonement receives thorough treatment for justification must have an adequate ground.

The author has placed the more elaborate or critical procedures by which he reached certain conclusions as well as references to works on the item being

considered in Notes in the Appendix. Reference is made to these Notes by numerals in the text. This has preserved much valuable material for the student without cluttering up the text itself or making it difficult reading.

There are a few criticisms. Dr. Buchanan slides over the question of constitutive righteousness much too easily. His positions may be correct enough but the question of relationship between righteousness and sanctification receives scant consideration. Moreover, in just what sense is one who is declared righteous also righteous in fact in virtue of the mystical union? Closer definition would have helped at these points.

Dr. Buchanan's own definition of justification with which he begins his work (p. 17) may mean the same thing as that of the Westminster Divines with which he concludes (p. 411) but this is not apparent from the statements themselves. Since we know what the doctrine of the Reformers is concerning justification we can understand what Buchanan means, but at several points his definitions as such are ambiguous enough that they could mean something else. It is the concluding definition which seems to control the thought throughout the book. That given on page 255 is an extension of the one on page 17.

The question of the priority of regeneration or justification is dismissed much too easily as a matter of little importance. His deductions from the idea that these are simultaneous gifts of the same free grace do not exhaust what one can say on that basis. Not only does it follow "that no unrenowned sinner is justified,—and that every believer, as soon as he believes, is pardoned and accepted of God" (p. 404), but also that every renewed person is justified, and, since justification is by faith, that every renewed person begins immediately to exercise saving faith. The question of the *Ordo Salutis* receives little attention among us in these days, but it remains a necessary one if there is to be careful and accurate definition of the various elements of salvation.

Neither volume is clearly marked as a reprint, except on the jacket which is not an integral part of the book and can easily be lost. That on justification is marked on the inside of the flyleaf as a reprint from a specific edition, but the work by Crawford bears no such obvious indication of its true nature. While we are grateful to Baker Book House for both reprints that on Justification seems most especially to meet a real need in our day.

— RAYMOND R. VAN HEUKELOM.

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*A Tale of Two Brothers*, by Mabel Richmond Brailsford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1954. Pp. 7-301. \$4.00.

One does not have to determine the author's purpose in this work; she sets it forth clearly and cogently and it stimulates one's desire to read it. As such this book is very revealing. For many of us, the legend concerning the partnership of the cofounders of Methodism, John and Charles Wesley, is as firmly entrenched as it seems to be "fixed for all time in the twin profiles of the medallion on the walls of Westminster Abbey" (p. 11). However, this work is determined to point out that the two parted as coworkers halfway in life and that the rift was instigated and promoted by Charles. Furthermore, the primary concern of the book is to present the events and motives that brought about the breach; the major part of the book is written to portray Charles free from John's influence, even though the latter is an integral part of the story. This synopsis will attempt to present the author's portrayal of the influences and events that molded the life of Charles, his character, and the consequent effect on the relationship to John and the cause of Methodism.

John Wesley presented an unusual insight into his brother's character when he wrote to him, "How apt you are to take the colour of your company" (p. 192). This is particularly obvious during the formative years of his life; many

and varied were the influences. As the last of eighteen children, he received his piety and faith from his mother, Susanna; his love for the classics from his father, who disagreed with but depended greatly on his mother. When at eight years of age he left for the quadrangle of Westminster School, her "over-admonitory" letters continued to work their influence. It was here that his brother Sam, seventeen years his elder, assumed a fatherly role for ten years. His "verse-making" fostered Charles' literary activity; while his brother shared with Westminster Abbey, whose shadows fell over the quadrangle, the fostering of Charles' "idolatrous love" for the Mother Church.

Consequently, Charles was a person of "deep affections and unswerving loyalties" who considered no sin so heinous as that of "thinking himself better than others" (p. 32). Thus it was that at Oxford he transferred his loyalty to John, even though unwillingly at first. His mother, Susanna, cast her shadow over his life because of John's "mother-fixation" as Brailsford described it, which ruined John's first and second romances and provided the setting for the abortion of the third with Grace Murray. The "Holy Club" at Oxford under John's leadership and Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* coupled with an earlier renouncing of his uncle's estates turned Charles, and John as well, to a life of rigid self-examination — "self-vivisection," an "other-worldly" view of reality, a social concern for holiness' sake which was modified later on but never developed beyond the point of relieving misery and striking at the roots of the social disorder.

The seeds of distrust were sown when Charles and John were on their way to Georgia with some new colonists. Charles saw the folly of John's exhortations and "obstinate credulity" with respect to the hypocrisy of the penitents, many of whom (the women) were attracted by John's magnetic character. Even though Charles relied on his brother to solve his difficulties for

another twenty years, the seeds of skepticism brought fruit in the crisis that ruined the possibility of John's marital happiness and threatened to destroy the two decades of work that had been completed. Their work in Georgia was a failure; Charles departed for England and John followed later when his more than pastoral interest in Sophy Hopkey was hindered by his "mother-fixation," fostering an untenable situation that forced his hasty return to England.

The crisis of faith came within two days for the brothers. Under the guiding influence of Peter Bohler, a Moravian, Charles while on his sick bed and John at Aldersgate experienced and accepted the "scandalous" doctrine of justification by faith, casting aside their former ideal of preaching and practising "justification by respectability" (p. 111). As at Pentecost, so here the spirit worked, "the phial was broken and the liberated soul stepped out into the world, 'no longer ego-centric, but theo-centric'" (p. 116).

The "new birth," as they described it, did not produce an unwavering certainty for John Wesley until he visited Herrnhut. Active as Charles was, his genius was derivative from John, and in their partnership at Bristol it was the overwhelming force of John's precept and example that drove Charles to the task of being an itinerant missionary. The world became John's parish. Thus began their missionary endeavor which fostered the establishment of societies wherever they went. John's bent for introspection disappeared, but Charles tended toward seclusion and withdrawal. John's aversion to mysticism accounts for his rejection of many of Charles' hymns written at this time and found expression in his judgement "His [Charles] least favor was in his hymns" (p. 150). But it is the hymns for which Charles is known today.

Charles' marriage to Sally Gwynne fulfilled the forebodings of John that it would end his itinerant activity. At age forty, Charles passed from his brother's influence to that of his wife.

However, the cleavage between the

two brothers crystallized when John planned to marry Grace Murray. At this juncture John's desires were permitted to disregard his own judgement and he forgot about the practical consequences it would have on his itinerant activity. Aware of the consequences of his own marital experience which hindered his missionary activity, Charles was determined that the world should continue to be John's parish. Even though determined to use every legitimate means to hinder the union, Charles resorted to "caddish" means and contemptible deceit to cause Grace Murray to turn to John Bennett, her rejected suitor. Even though a measure of reconciliation was secured by George Whitefield, irreparable damage had been done to John's private happiness, his leadership had to be reestablished because of the slander involved, and the coldness, fostered by Charles, continued to grow between the brothers. The fateful date of October, 1749, marked the severance of confidence between the brothers.

Charles' aversion to John's participation in married life finds further expression in the well-meaning but hasty marriage which was fostered and arranged by John's friends. Charles was not given an opportunity to hinder it. But Molly Vaziellle, a city-pampered woman who was unaccustomed to the loneliness or hardships of travel, had her hatred spurred by the attention of the sisters of the Society and in 1752 the separation occurred when John refused to countenance her vocal vilification and physical abuse. Her death in 1781 terminated thirty years of John's marital martyrdom, precipitated by his brother's treachery. His ill-fated marriage nearly ruined his career as a field preacher.

Further evidences of Charles' hostility continued to be manifested. In spite of his love for Mother Church, Charles insisted on the "self-support" of his preachers to avoid the burden on the societies and thus provide practical insight into the problems of others. But the predominant reason was to break John's control and authority, thus avoid-

ing the bondage which had held him [Charles] for many years. The magnanimity of John's character is evident here in that he withstood his preachers' demand for separation because of Charles' "idolatrous love" for the Church of England.

However, Charles' "rigid clericalism" and John's obvious disregard for Mother Church furthered the cleavage. The burden of the itinerant work fell increasingly on John's shoulders and such a mood of despair to cause John to write to Charles that he (John) did not love God but that he was carried along in his work. When his mood cleared, John gave consent to Charles going his own way and he would carry on as best he could.

The conflict broke anew when John, who was not a consecrated bishop, ordained two men to be responsible for the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. John refused to enter into the controversy, but Charles fostered it in his correspondence with others. However, John's influence could not be repelled by Charles. Outwardly hostile to his brother, he maintained an inner loyalty evidenced by the fact that he discontinued his correspondence with Lady Huntingdon when she accused John of senility and hypocrisy.

Certain failings must be noted in this interesting and informative work. The chronology of certain events is difficult to follow. As the personality and conduct of John overshadowed and influenced Charles, so it seems to have influenced and found a heavier emphasis in this book than the author had planned as she stated in her foreword. In addition, her scathing comments on certain themes in Charles' hymns must be regarded with charity.

While it is a point of criticism, the book presents a rich insight into the life of John Wesley, which the author has drawn from his *Journals*. This book may be read to great advantage, not only with respect to the things that have been mentioned, but to furnish some understanding of the theology of Methodism during its establishment in



England and America and of the social conditions in England at the time. The Lord blessed the work of the cofounders, not because of but in spite of their human foibles; even the greatest depths of consecration are not free of mortal failings.

—NEAL J. MOL.

*The Religious Bodies of America*  
by F. E. Mayer, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954. Pp. xiii-587. \$7.65.

F. E. Mayer is Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary (Missouri Lutheran Synod) at St. Louis, Missouri. His teaching began more than twenty-five years ago at Concordia Seminary at Springfield, Illinois. The text is an outgrowth of his years of teaching. While it was written primarily for the theological student and the parish minister, yet laymen who are interested in the doctrines and practises of the several religious bodies will find it a mine of rich information.

He takes the religious bodies in the following order: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Arminian, Unionizing churches, Inner Light, Millennial groups, Interdenominational groups, Anti-Trinitarian bodies, Healing groups and Esoteric groups. Each study usually begins with a statement of the formal principle (the source from which the teaching is derived and the standard by which it is judged), and a statement of the material principle (the central thought of the theological system). In the light of those two principles the following doctrines are generally covered: doctrine of God, doctrine of man, Christ's person and work, justification, the sacraments, the church, and eschatology.

There is a careful statement of the relation of the Scripture to creeds. Creeds are not a source or judge of divine truth but they are a witness to the truth revealed in Christ. Two factors are pointed out which undermine creeds.

1. The pragmatic principle which says,

"No Creeds but Deeds." This pragmatic principle wants a united Christendom that is predicated not on a unity of faith and confession but on the opportunity it affords to share diverse religious experiences. The other factor which undermines creeds is the rise of Liberal Theology which held "that truth is found in experiences of the individual and of society and therefore it fluctuates and no creedal statement can fix it permanently" (p. 4). He is clear and distinctive in setting forth the doctrinal differences that divide the churches on the bases of their creeds. We believe the author has succeeded well in an objective evaluation of the doctrines and practises of the various religious groups in the light of historical development. His purpose is that Christians may know the faith and contend in love for that faith once delivered to the saints.

The analyses of the philosophy and theology of the Roman Catholic Church are penetrating and profound. The author points out that Thomas Aquinas is the teacher of that Church and is supposed to have the solution for our modern disorder. The Neo-Thomist tries to steer a middle course between anthropocentric philosophy which identifies God and man and dialectic philosophy which sees an insoluble tension between reason and faith. We believe the neo-Thomist is right when he holds that "our autonomous culture has lost unity, direction and depth and has become a prey of agnosticism, naturalism and individualism." We believe the neo-Thomist is wrong when he holds that the solution of our spiritual and moral problems lies within the powers of human reason and man's inherent capacity for good. Mayer believes that the present world is atomistic. All human activities are put in compartments and have no unity of purpose. Man is divorced from God, nationalism from world brotherhood, philosophy from theology, the natural from the supernatural. Modern man has no goal beyond his immediate interests. The naturalistic and mechanistic philosophy "leaves no room for an

absolute criteria of moral behavior and offers no final purpose for human existence."

The Roman Catholic adds tradition and reason to the Scripture as equally valid sources of truth and guidance for faith and conduct. That accounts for the various types of religion found in the Roman Catholic picture. That also accounts for the difficulty in obtaining a clear picture of Roman Catholicism. Frederick Heiler points out that Roman Catholicism represents seven different types of religion:—1. Primitive superstition, 2. Legalistic religion, 3. Political-social religion, 4. A rationalistic religion of theological doctrines, 5. An esoteric mystery religion, 6. A mystical religion, 7. And even an evangelical religion of salvation. That some of these types obviously contradict other types does not apparently concern the Roman Catholic. "Consistency, thou art a jewel." That also accounts for the fact that when a Protestant challenges a specific Roman Catholic error the reply is that the Roman Catholic Church does not teach that particular doctrine.

Upon that confused base Romanism has exalted the sacraments to such position, purpose, and power that the sacrament can fully supply all of one's needs from the cradle to the grave. One needs no Bible, nor even reason, but just a Sacrament and,—that is in the hands of a man.

While Dr. Mayer is objective and irenic in his coverage of the religious bodies, his chapters on Lutheranism reveal insights which perhaps only a Lutheran scholar could have. In presenting the areas of difference between the Lutheran and Reformed bodies he shows it a difference of theological orientation which appears first in the concept of worship. Luther held that all papal abuses contrary to the central doctrine of the Gospel should be abolished. Calvin held that all ceremonies for which there was no specific Scriptural command should be abolished. Mayer says, "Outwardly therefore the Zwinglian and Calvinian reformation seemed

to be much more thorough and radical than the Lutheran." The second area of difference is in the view concerning the means of grace. Luther held to the objective character of the means of grace as the only foundation for faith. Assurance is based solely upon the objective promises of the Gospel. Reformed theology according to Mayer professes to be activistic and therefore directs the Christian to seek assurance in a program of Christian activity rather than in the means of grace. The third area of difference according to Mayer is that "Reformed theological principles allow and actually call for a great variety of theological trends." He says this latitude is due in no small degree to Calvin's view of "common grace." We believe that Mayer is not at his best in that estimate and evaluation. It is true that "common grace" is a tenet of Calvinism but it is not the major tenet. Calvinism has a distinctive life and world view, not a latitudinarian life and world view. In this area of the third difference we believe he suggests that the tail wags the dog.

The Arminian bodies cover all the Methodists, the Holiness bodies, the General Baptists, the bodies related to the Methodists, though of independent origin, such as the United Brethren and the Evangelical Association, the Salvation Army, Mennonites, etc.

Part six deals with unionizing Churches. After stating the motives for merger he says, "The first type of unionism is predicated on the premise that the Church can best fulfill her mission by external union. The advocates of this principle overlook the fact that history has established beyond a doubt that church unions without doctrinal unity have strengthened neither the merging bodies nor Christendom as a whole" (p. 351). Among examples are the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the United Church of Canada. For all of that we believe he is fair to the World Council of Churches when he says that they "seem to favor a continuance of denominational distinctions

without denominational differences until the time when all Christian denominations unify in true unity." We wish that he might have indicated what the nature and form of that unity might be.

The short chapter on fundamentalism gives both the strength and weakness of that movement. Its strength is in its purpose to preserve and defend traditional Christianity against the inroads of rationalism. Its weaknesses is in its excesses. He does not equate Fundamentalism with such terms as "obscurantist," "naive," "outmoded" and "anti-intellectual." Rather he equates it with its essential purpose than with its accidents and excesses.

The appeal of the book is in its comprehensiveness characterised by an objective and irenic spirit.

— ABRAHAM RYNRBANDT.

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*Speaking in the Church*, by John Edward Lantz, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1954. Pp. 192.

This is an excellent book dealing with "the fundamentals of speaking in the church." It considers the purposes and problems which speakers have and discusses them in religious terminology in a brief, succinct and highly edifying manner. The book was originally intended to be an aid to students in preparation for the ministry, describing the methods best used in helping students become effective speakers in the pulpit. However, the book is so written that it can be a highly effective instrument even for those who have been in the ministry for some years, as they seek to reassess the effectiveness of their preaching. Others, too, who wish to be useful in the church as teachers, elders, deacons, etc., will find much helpful material here.

The author has been a teacher of speech at the University of Michigan, at McCormick Theological Seminary, at the Salvation Army Training School for Officers, at the Vanderbilt University School of Religion and at the Extension

Division, University of Tennessee. In addition he has had the experience of two rural pastorates, an associate pastorate at a large university church, and two pastorates at large city churches. Thus, from the standpoint of education, experience and practice he is well qualified to write a book such as this.

The book itself is divided into eight chapters, each chapter covering a specific phase of the speaking ministry. Chapter one is entitled "The Purposes of Speaking," which the author maintains are three in number: to edify, to encourage, and to comfort. Here, I believe, the author has put his finger on a sore spot of much of our preaching. Too often there are ministers who have no real purpose in their message. They stand in the pulpit with no higher purpose than to get through thirty minutes of talking as a part of a service. Oftentimes it must be said that ministers preach because they are expected to, not because they have a message they wish to impart or because they are seeking to win or encourage or comfort someone. Obviously, if there is no purpose in mind in bringing the message there will be little accomplished in the preaching of it. To present a message well there must be a real purpose. Every minister before preparing his sermon ought to sit down and ask himself, "What am I trying to accomplish in the bringing of this message?" Not only would this make his preaching pointed, but it would give him a much greater sense of confidence and assurance.

The second chapter, "Preparing and Using the Mind," covers another important phase of speaking. Assurance and confidence can be generated, not alone by a specific purpose, but also by proper preparation, mentally and psychologically. Says the author, "The best way of preparing the mind for speaking in the church is to think of speaking as a process of sharing Christian experiences and convictions with friends." This is precisely what the speaker should be doing. His function as a preacher is not to scold, or to give

his people "a piece of his mind" (which all too often he can ill afford to spare), but to help his people in the solving of their spiritual problems, and to enlist them in service for the kingdom of Christ. This makes of the message a cooperative enterprise between the preacher and the people. This is an excellent way, too, of overcoming fear. The speaker who is thinking in terms of helping his listeners, rather than of how well he is doing or what kind of an impression he is making, has taken the first step in overcoming handicapping nervousness. Some nervousness in speaking is natural and even helpful, but excessive fear is always detrimental to effective communication. Self-confidence (not cocksureness) thus developed from the feeling of sharing adds to the effectiveness of speaker and message. Other elements in the preparation of the mind are genuine Christian living, wide reading, extensive writing, effective remembering, and specific preparation, all of them essentials to good speaking. In some detail the author explains each one of these and how they may more adequately be practiced. The portion of this chapter devoted to specific preparation is most helpful, as the author discusses the theme, the method of delivery, the organizing of the material for delivery and its rehearsal. Every minister may read these words with profits.

Phillips Brooks once said that preaching is truth through personality. As speaking is an act requiring the use of the body as well as the mind, the third chapter explains the preparation and use of the body in speaking. The preacher is not on exhibition but nevertheless must realize that his personal appearance, his general health, his personal magnetism or lack of it, his gestures or lack of them are important to the reception of the message. The speaker must guard his general health through proper rest and exercise. The body, prepared by rest and health, and in a state of tonicity, then can be a most effective medium for the message. By proper and effective gesturing

(which can be developed), by putting the whole body into the message, by a manifestation of earnestness through the whole personality the message is greatly enhanced. "Every speaker should use as many parts of the body for gesturing as he possibly can to aid him in the process of effective and accurate communication."

The chapter on "Preparing and Using the Voice" is an important and excellent one. Such matters as the development of a conversational tone, the support of the richness and fulness of tone, centralized breathing, the development of projection of tone, the qualities of the voice, and eliminating defects in the voice are discussed. Here again is an important part of preaching which is sadly neglected. Many a sermon has been a failure because of poor vocal habits which could have been good habits. Suffice it to say that "the voice needs careful preparation for speaking in the church—surely just as careful as for speaking anywhere else in God's whole world. And after it is carefully cultivated, it needs to be effectively used in presenting the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to people who are hungering for love and searching for light. . . . As speakers in the church we owe it to ourselves, our people, and our Lord to prepare carefully our voices for speaking and to use them as effectively as we possibly can, for to the people who hear us speak our voice is as the voice of God."

Other chapters of this fine book are: V. "The Listening Congregation;" VI. "Outlining for Listeners;" VII. "Spiritual Appeals;" VIII. "Appropriateness for Various Occasions." Each one of these is a valuable chapter although space does not permit a discussion of each one individually.

On the whole this is a fine book. Read carefully it can be of much help to every minister and especially to a seminary student who, just beginning the work of speaking, has probably not formed many bad habits which must be unlearned for an effective ministry. The chapters are devoted to phases of

the speaking ministry about which every minister wants to be informed and needs to be informed in order to be effective. Read in conjunction with a course in homiletics or practical theology the book would form excellent supplemental reading. It is written in a highly interesting fashion, in a way that everyone can easily understand, and contains some good sermon material, anecdotes and illustrations. It is a short book, only 192 pages, but each page has interesting and worthwhile material.

—JOHN HAINS.

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*How to Start Counseling*, by William E. Hulme, New York: Abingdon Press, 1955. Pp. 157. \$2.50.

Today's successful pastor should by all means have a counseling program. His available hours should be listed in the weekly bulletin. His sermons should have some discreet reference to the help given. Much of the life and ministry of the church of today may come to revolve around those hours when the preacher is in consultation with those who come to him for help.

Such being today's pastoral climate, this book, *How to Start Counseling*, presents a sane approach to the whole field of counseling. Author Hulme is in no sense debunking this aspect of ministerial life, but rather helping the minister to a counseling program that is properly woven into the other major parts of church life. The whole book rests upon the premise that every ministry would be strengthened by a sound counseling program. No space is wasted arguing the basic merits. In that sense the book is true to its title. It begins after the reader is convinced of the need for this kind of work. It endeavors to answer the question, How?

Another premise which is stated but not argued, and rightly so, is that the counseling effort on the part of the minister must be evangelical in its approach. The author's point of view is indicated by the following paragraph (p. 17):

It is fundamental to the pastor's religion that power is available to give him sufficiency in all things so that he may abound unto every good work and present every man complete in Christ Jesus. Christianity is a religion of rebirth. There is an evangel for the captives: they can be set free through the grace of Christ from the destructive emotions that prevent their development into the fullness of his stature. They are not predestined to their inhibitions and failures of the past, for every part of their personality can be redeemed. The pastor as well as his counselee can become new.

In keeping with the present temper of the best books in the field, this book recognizes that the essential work of the counselor is to lead the counselee to Christ.

A third assumption upon which the book rests is that the reader is already familiar with the counseling techniques. In the span of one page the author indicates the five principles upon which proper counseling rests. The bibliography lists most of the recent writing on the art of counseling. The author evidently writes with the conviction that this area has been adequately covered in the past few years.

Upon these assumptions—the need for a counseling program in the church, an evangelical approach, and a general knowledge of the counseling techniques—the author proceeds to tell how to get started. The chapter titles will indicate the practical nature of the book. The first five titles are: "The Problem," "Educating for Counseling," "The Mechanics of the Program," "Beginning with Youth," and "When They Don't Come." Such matters as suitable place and hours of availability are dealt with in remembrance that there are other equally important aspects of the minister's life. One section deals specifically with educating the congregation to accept and use this part of the church program. This may seem a bit elementary to the minister who is used to

formulating his own speeches, for on page 24 we have a model speech to be delivered on Sunday morning written out word for word immediately following a very complete outline of what to say. Is this, perhaps, an affront to the intelligence and linguistic ability of the preacher-reader? Nevertheless, every minister must be careful at this point, for often congregations are out of the habit of coming to the minister for help with their spiritual problems. Other congregations are repelled by the way in which the whole matter is presented, or by the deportment of general attitudes of the minister.

One excellent chapter, "Beginning with Youth," gives fine leading in bringing the pastor into rapport with his young people. The author's own experience would particularly qualify him for giving practical advice in this field for he served as pastor of the Clinton Heights Lutheran Church of Columbus, Ohio, and is now college chaplain and head of the division of Christianity and philosophy at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa. In this position he carries on a very extensive counseling program among the students. In addition to his own seminary training, Dr. Hulme received a Ph. D. degree from Boston University where he was associated with the Institute of Pastoral Care as well as being graduate assistant in the department of the psychology of religion.

The last half of the book is practical in a far different sense; it deals with the subjective problems rather than the objective. It asks, Is your preaching in accord with the highest ideals of a counseling program? Does your calling in the homes of your congregation contribute to the usefulness of your counseling and vice versa? How does the administrative work of your church fit in with your work as counselor? What about your own spiritual life? There are stresses and temptations in counseling that are subtle and hard to ward off. Have you kept up in general scholarship as well as in the field of counseling so that your mind and spirit are sharp enough to detect people's needs? Is

there mismanagement in your own home and busyness in your own life that testifies against you in every counseling session? While the external aspects of a counseling program do present difficulties, the true problem lies in the spiritual aspects. As one reads these last chapters he finds himself in the role of counselee with Dr. Hulme as counselor. He finds that the chapters are judging him, rather than he judging the chapters. If the preacher is himself in need of catharsis, here is at least a partial opportunity to get it. He will find expressed here the bottled up stresses and anxieties of his own soul.

This subjective approach, I believe, sets this book apart from most others in the field and gives it a distinctive value. There is certainly unique help here in the mechanics of the program of counseling, for most books in this field seem to take it for granted that the *How* can be solved without a treatise upon it. But the greatest help can come in seeing afresh the vast spiritual demands upon a minister if he is adequately to help those who come to him burdened with deep-seated spiritual problems. Evidently Pastor Hulme was not asleep to the total challenge of the ministry during those three years in the pastorate. One lays this book down with the certainty that counseling is not the end-all and cure-all for every congregation; but also with the solemn knowledge that unless this essential work of helping his congregation in their spiritual problems is not met one way or another, a minister is failing his people.

—CHRISTIAN A. WALVOORD.

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*No Man Knows My History*, by Fawn M. Brodie, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1954, Pp. 476. \$5.75.

Books written by denominational historians generally suffer from a bias on the part of the writer. This is also true of those written by an author strongly opposed to a specific religion or denom-

ination. Most of the books which we have on the life of Joseph Smith fall into either of the above categories. This one by Fawn M. Brodie, dealing with the life of Joseph Smith, is a welcome change. Because she has no axe to grind, the reader is led to a fuller understanding of Joseph Smith and his religion. It was inevitable that in giving us the story of the life of Joseph Smith she should also give us a history of the Mormon religion to the death of the founder.

The book is the result of at least ten years of research. It is very obvious that Mrs. Brodie has not spared herself in getting at the primary sources. Court records, newspapers, letters, church records, personal accounts, every bit of information that could shed some light on the man Joseph Smith, has been examined. She has been careful to point out the sources of her information and to warn us when these sources ought not to be taken too seriously. On the other hand, when her sources have led her to conclusions definitely at odds with those of previous biographers, she has ably defended them.

Books on Mormonism have generally demeaned the family of Smith. Mrs. Brodie finds them much the same as their neighbors. They were as much a product of New England as Jonathan Edwards. Their constant movement from place to place can not be explained in terms of shiftlessness, but rather a general change in the living habits of the country. Some of Joseph Smith's peculiarities, as for example his search for lost treasure, were little different from those of his neighbors.

In most books written by non-Mormons, the Book of Mormon is said to be the work of Sidney Rigdon who in turn made use of a novel written by a man named Spaulding. Mrs. Brodie in a well documented appendix reviews the evidence on both sides and comes to the conclusion that the work was that of Joseph Smith and certainly no plagiarism of Spaulding's novel. She seeks to explain the sources of a number of

passages in the Book of Mormon by showing the extent to which Smith drew directly from life on the American frontier. The impassioned revivalist sermon, the popular notions about the origin of the Indian, the current theological battles, and the political crusades of the day are all brought into the book. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ, wrote in a review of the Book of Mormon: "This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote in his Book of Mormon every error and almost every truth discussed in New York for the last ten years." His book became a potpourri of the thinking of his day. To know some of these things, is to have a good commentary on the Book of Mormon: "This prophet Smith,

Mrs. Brodie deals rather sympathetically with the movement of the Mormons to Ohio and then on to Missouri. One must bear in mind that many of Smith's followers were ordinary people with a misplaced faith. The time was such that many voices were calling for attention, and the frontier people were certainly not grounded in the Christian faith.

Life in Nauvoo, when polygamy was at its height for the leaders of the movement, is very well done. The accuracy of her account and the constant references to primary sources make her indictment of the movement all the more trenchant. It is difficult to conceive of men of such low character commanding so much respect from their followers. Perhaps even more astounding is the resilience of the religion. On several occasions it rebounded from a near death to a greater strength. We must give Joseph Smith due credit for unusual leadership in these situations. He had a gift to inspire people when all seemed lost. They trusted his word even when they despised him as a man.

His relationships with the political parties of his day tend to point out to us a very low caliber of moral leadership.

Defections in the leadership of the movement finally led to Smith's ruin.



An expose of life in Nauvoo set one group against another and brought about violence. With the countryside aroused, Joseph Smith was arrested and jailed. Here in the Carthage jail, at the age of thirty-nine, he was attacked by a mob, leaped from the window, and in a few minutes was dead.

For those who have never read a life of Joseph Smith, this is certainly the best. It is also an excellent background for a study of the doctrines of the Mormons. Obviously in dealing with Mormons one should have more than this. One could do no better than to secure tracts and pamphlets direct from the Mormon press. With Mrs. Brodie's book as a frame of reference, one should have little trouble spotting Mormon doctrine which in print may seem rather innocuous, yet which denies the fundamentals of Christianity.

— LAMBERT J. PONSTEIN.

*Preaching*, by Walter Russell Bowie, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954. Pp. 224. \$2.75.

The author of this book has served as a Christian preacher for over forty years and has also been on the faculty or served as special lecturer in four theological seminaries, including two famous seminaries in New York City. He attained national renown as a preacher and teacher. The book now under review has what it takes to prove inspiring and illuminating to Christian preachers and to theological students. It would do all Christian preachers a great deal of good to read a book on preaching at least once a year, and Dr. Bowie's book is really "tops" in the field of preaching.

The first chapter answers the question, "What is preaching?" It contains truly the radiant voice of Christian experience. There is evident also the author's large knowledge of the vast literature in the field of Christian preaching. At the end of each chapter a few of the most famous books on preaching are mentioned, and even this can have

wonderful results if preachers will read such of these books as are still unknown to them.

The author devotes a chapter to the man in the pulpit, the congregation, and the message. There is such a person as "the wrong man in the pulpit." There is such a thing as "the pretense of preaching." But the reader is sure to go places when he reads what Dr. Bowie has to say about the authentic preacher. Says the author, "In mind and heart he is God's man. Whether his personal gifts are large or small, he commands attention; for in his voice are the accents of an authority that is higher than the voices of this earth. When he speaks, men listen, as they have always listened to those from whom they catch the mightier sense that 'thus saith the Lord'." While the author has fine things to say about the personal spiritual qualifications of a preacher, he is equally helpful and illuminating on the relation of pastoral faithfulness to preaching power. Ever and again you hear it said of a preacher that he is a fine preacher but a poor pastor or excellent as a shepherd of souls but deficient as a pulpiteer. Dr. Bowie teaches that in order to be a great preacher in the true sense, a Christian minister has to be an untiring and devoted pastor.

A chapter of this book is devoted to three aspects of the preacher's opportunity. The first is the mediatorial. "The man in the pulpit must be a meeting point between the needs of human souls and the rich promise of the grace of God." The second aspect is pastoral, but more than pastoral. It might be described by the word appealing—an appeal to a wide enough circle and with practical result. The third aspect is prophetic. "The prophet first of all will be helping his people remember the everlasting reality of God, the moral accountability of man, the sacredness of personality, and the seriousness of life." The author here soon comes to Christ. Preachers will benefit by reading this book.

— SIMON BLOCKER.

## WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

### ARTICLES

G. Ernest Wright is professor of Old Testament at McCormick Seminary, Chicago. This article was his final lecture of the series entitled, "Biblical Theology and the Faith of the Church" which was delivered at the seminary October 13-14, 1955.

I. John Hesselink, '54, since graduation has been a missionary in Japan during which time he was brought into close association with Emil Brunner.

Eugene Heideman, '54, is doing his doctoral work at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.

### BOOK REVIEWS

Lester J. Kuypers is professor of Old Testament at Western Seminary.

Raymond R. Van Heukelom, '40, is pastor of First Church, Holland.

Neal Mol is a member of the senior class.

Abraham Rynbrandt, '25, is pastor of Maplewood Church, Holland.

John Hains, '45, is pastor of Trinity Church, Holland.

Christian A. Walvoord, '37, is pastor of Third Church, Holland.

Lambert J. Ponstein, '52, is professor of Bible at Hope College.

Simon Blocker is professor emeritus of Western Seminary.

